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Ps. CXIX.

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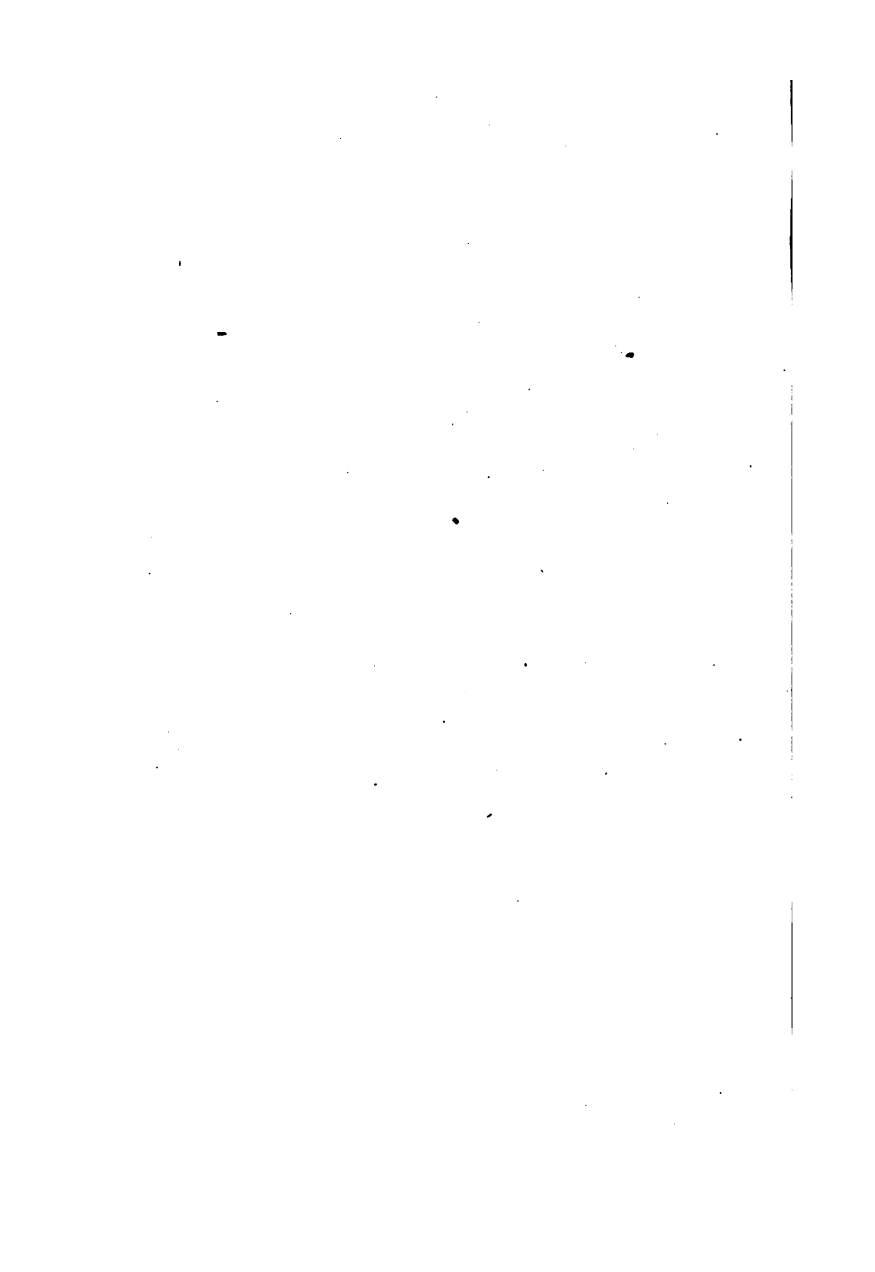
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THE
Path of Life.

BY

HENRY A. ROWLAND D. D.,

AUTHOR OF A WORK ON THE COMMON MAXIMS OF INFIDELITY.

· Thou wilt show me the PATH OF LIFE."
PSALM XVI. 11.

FOURTH EDITION.

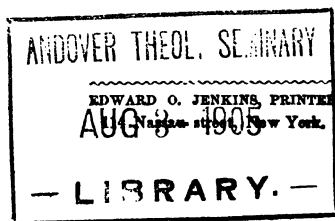
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Prefatory Remarks.

HE who writes on a theme like this, will find it of great importance properly to conceive, and lucidly to express the truth. It should be his aim to draw a pure theology from the Living Fountain; and to set forth the Word of Life not only intelligibly, but in a way not to be misunderstood.

There are already before the public different works, designed to guide the sinner to Christ; but they are fewer in number than is generally supposed, and many of them are exceedingly defective in Scriptural simplicity. Instead of being written in a style that a child may comprehend, or such as a pastor would use in showing the way of life to those who ask, "What must I do to be saved?" the form and dignity of doctrinal discussions are often assumed. Such discussions, though excel-

lent in their place, are here inappropriate. When an inquirer comes to ask the great question alluded to, he needs such instruction as may guide him into the path of life; not a body of divinity given him to read, nor an elaborate doctrinal treatise, however useful at other times. He needs, above everything else, that simple view of truth which will communicate most impressively and practically a knowledge of the Gospel plan of salvation, and guide him intelligently to the Saviour.

How far the Author has succeeded in the difficult task of preparing a work modeled on these principles, must be determined by others. His endeavor to prepare such a work originated in the pressing need felt for a volume, which should explain the points of which a pastor is compelled to treat over and over again, for the proper instruction of those who are inquiring the way of life.

To Christian parents, and all others who feel the need of a plain analysis of truths affecting the conversion of the soul, this little work is especially commended.

Preface

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

SINCE the first edition of this work was issued, it has undergone a careful revision. Numerous improvements have been made in the form of expression, and by the addition of new matter. The Author has taken advantage of the suggestions of friends, to whom he is under great obligation, and has added one entire chapter, and also several incidents from his own observation, illustrative of different points of practical interest. The chapter added, is that in which it is shown that the church cannot take the place of Christ as a Saviour. This is deemed important, to meet certain tendencies of the awakened mind. Of the value of these and other improvements, the public will judge. Ear-

vi PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

nestly desirous that his work may be useful, and with many prayers that God will bless it as the means of spiritual good to those into whose hands it may fall, the author again commends it to all who desire to know and walk in the path of life.

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The Path of Life.

CHAPTER I.

A CALL TO THE WANDERER.

WERE you to discover a traveller, at dusk of evening, passing into a thick forest, along a road where there were deep ravines, bridgeless rivers, and dangers unforeseen accumulating at every step, you would instinctively call on him to stop. If he had advanced so far that your voice could but just reach him, still you would call to him with an intensely earnest cry, Turn back, turn back, or you are lost. Should he regard the intimation of danger, all would be well; but if he should dash on, heedless of it, he would assume the responsibility of his fate. It is on this principle that God addresses men in the Gospel. Perceiving the multitude in the broad road of impenitence, pressing on to everlasting death, he calls to them, out of motives of compassion, from his glorious throne in heaven, bidding them turn from their evil ways, "for why will ye die?"

This call, O wanderer from God, is addressed to you. While going on with the multitude, thoughtless of your course, you are encompassed by a thousand dangers. You may precipitate yourself from a dreadful precipice, or plunge into the stream of death. Every step is bearing you onward towards a hopeless destiny. Your peril is imminent; and God, beholding it, admonishes you of the dangers into which you are advancing, and bids you turn. That you may feel the solemn earnestness of the admonition, and escape the threatened danger, permit me to lay before you the scriptural facts respecting your character as a sinner, your future prospects, and the way of life through Jesus Christ, that you may recognize this as the call of God to you, and be inclined by motives of heavenly influence to turn and live.

O, reader, whosoever thou art that dost look upon these pages, consider the infinite value to your happiness of true religion, and do not lightly turn away from the truthful considerations here presented. Do not cast down this book as containing nothing worthy of your attention, or deserving seriously to interest your thoughts. For so sure as death is nigh, must your immortal spirit present itself before Christ in judgment, to give account of the manner in which you have

treated his blessed Gospel, and of the use you have made of the precious opportunities given you to seek your salvation. Do not run over these pages hastily, for they contain directions which may guide you into the way to heaven. Let the truths they teach become the subject of your meditations, and give them earnest heed. They set before you an open door, and present motives of thrilling power to lead you to Christ. If you are guided by these truths, you may pursue the journey of life in safety, and reach at last the home of the blessed. If you do not regard them, the termination of this journey will be fatal to your happiness.

There are several inquiries affecting your relations to God, and your hope of future happiness, which you should most seriously consider, that you may get a clear perception of your natural condition as a sinner, and may give heed to the merciful invitation, to turn into the path of life.

1. WHAT AM I? I find myself in a world of thinking and responsible beings, surrounded by good and evil, acting a part in the great drama of life, and soon to pass off its stage; and I would gladly know my true character, and what my prospects founded on this character are, of happiness or misery to come. Who can tell me what I am?

This inquiry receives a true response from the

sacred oracles. These teach that you are a creature of God, the product of his forming hand, sustained by his power, and endowed with a capacity to know and to love him. You are a moral being, capable of discerning right and wrong, and of acting under the guiding influence of truth. You are a responsible being, endowed with moral faculties, and fitted in your intellectual and moral nature to be a proper subject of law. You are an immortal being, and are to live when the world and all that it contains shall have perished in the conflagration of the last great day.

As the creature of God, rationally endowed, and the subject of his moral government, you are bound to know and to love him. The obligation to this duty is commensurate with your being. It began with your existence, as the obligations of a child toward its parents commence at birth; and will continue to rest on you forever. It is recognized by the law of nature written on the heart, and revealed in the ten commandments. The law of Sinai had its origin in the relations of man as a creature. It was not enacted, but only revealed, when written by God on the two tables of stone. It had been in force from the creation, and was but confirmed by our Saviour, when on earth. When the ritual law had passed away forever, its authority remained unimpaired; and it now stands

forth in the sacred oracles as the guide of our moral actions.

This law, commanding us to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves, you are bound perfectly to obey. But this obedience you have never rendered, this love you have never felt. The world has borne off your affections, and you have sought its pleasures, in preference to obeying God. In thus choosing the path of worldly happiness, you have failed to observe the great law on which the holiness and happiness of the universe depend, and have sanctioned the apostacy of our first parents, by acting out the principles which governed them in their disobedience. Often have you neglected to think of God, to bend the knee in solemn prayer, to heed his admonitions, and to give ear to his heavenly call. It is evinced by all the conduct of your life hitherto, that you have never loved him as you ought.

Instead of this, innumerable positive transgressions have marked your wayward course. You have set up other gods as the objects of your adoration. Not that you have worshipped idols as the heathen do, but that you have set your affections on the riches, amusements, and pleasures of the world, as your chief good. These have taken the place of God in your mind, and you have treated the good things which the

world proffers you with those feelings of regard which should have been bestowed on him. Thus have you bowed down and worshipped, not the graven images of man's device, but those worldly objects which you have set up in the temple of your mind to the exclusion of the great Jehovah. You may not have taken his holy name on profane lips, but have you not gone up to his sanctuary and presented yourself before him in the attitude of devotion, with a trifling spirit? Have you not treated his name, his attributes, and his word with improper levity? Have you not profaned his Sabbath? Instead of spending its sacred hours in acts of devotion, have you not misimproved them? Is there a single duty enjoined by the first table of the law, which you have not neglected?

Have you not also failed as to the duties of the second? Let your thoughts recur to early youth, and reflect on countless acts of disobedience to your parents, in which you have failed to honor them. You may not have put in jeopardy the life of your fellow-being through malice, but has not your heart often swelled with that hateful emotion? Has not a revengeful feeling sometimes taken possession of it, in express violation of the command, "Thou shalt do no murder." Have not impure thoughts and desires often been indulged by you? Has not your tongue uttered

unkind and unjust remarks of your neighbor? And have you not viewed the things of others with an unlawful desire to possess them?

To these departures from the duties which the law prescribes, may there not be added your rejection of the Gospel? Its kind invitations have been addressed to you in vain. You have deliberately neglected to avail yourself of the means it provides to escape the impending wrath of God. Faithful parents have admonished you; pious teachers, interested in your spiritual welfare, have endeavored to guide you to Christ; and the ministers of the Gospel have instructed and warned you; but all in vain. God has dealt with you in his Providence, and by his Holy Spirit, but you would not yield your heart to his claims, nor come to Christ, that you might have life.

Do you ask what you are? You are a disobedient, guilty creature of God, unreclaimed by grace, and responsible for the ruin into which your sins have brought you. By your own voluntary disobedience you have incurred the penalty of the violated law; and you will not escape from it in the only way set before you in the Gospel. You may discover the evidence of that ruin into which you have fallen, in the convictions and fears by which you are sometimes oppressed.

Your conscience is not at ease. You cannot with truth affirm that you have always done what you thought to be right, and avoided what you knew to be wrong, but are sensible that you have often sinned against your conscience, and against what you knew to be your duty. Fear is the natural result of this disobedience. Our first parents, while innocent, knew no fear; but when they had sinned, they fled, trembling with apprehension, from the presence of the Lord into the thicket. In like manner, when you reflect on your sins, similar apprehensions disquiet you. Unprepared to die, you tremble at the thought of death. In view of it, a thousand considerations press on your anxious mind; and in these you may discover both the fact of your moral ruin, and the nature of that misery involved in it.

In the unhappiness which you often feel, you may perceive your destitution of that substantial good which the friendship of God imparts. You may be dazzled for a moment with the glare of the world, and charmed with its sensual delights; but when you look behind its scenes, and reflect in solitude on all that you know of its vanities, you discover nothing in the world capable of affording you true happiness. There are even moments when a sense of misery oppresses you, and you are ready to wish that you had never

been born, rather than live under the responsibilities which you know are laid on you. Often do you wish that there were no God, and strive to solace the fears which the thought of him occasions, by indulging some delusive hope, or some undefined wish of escape from the consequences of your transgressions. All these feelings of unhappiness are the result of sin. Instead of being sinless and happy, you are guilty, miserable, and undone, lost to the friendship of God, under the condemning power of his law, and exposed to everlasting perdition. This is your true moral position as a sinner; and this wretchedness you have brought on yourself. God condemns you, your own conscience condemns you, and dark and painful is the path you tread.

2. WHITHER AM I GOING? I find myself borne along on the tide of life. Companions and friends, once associated with me, have departed; and whither am I going?

To this the sacred Scriptures answer, that you are in the broad road to eternal death, are advancing to a fatal termination of your course, and that dangers are accumulating at every step. Can you doubt whither you are going? All the tendencies of your heart are to depart from God. The world has a stronger hold upon your affections than he; and it is the language of your daily con-

duct, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

Everything that you know of yourself should convince you whither your steps are tending. You are sensible that you do not love religious duties, that prayer is not pleasing to you, that the Sabbath is a weariness, that the Bible is not a book in which you delight, and that communion with Christ, at his table, presents to you no attractions. On the contrary, the world commands your affections, and, with its gay, thoughtless, and impenitent throng, you are pressing on to the perdition of the ungodly.

Can you doubt whither you are going? Ask it of your conscience; ask it of God. And the answer will be, that as a sinner, unreclaimed by grace, you are in the path which leads to death; and not a step have you ever yet taken to escape from it. In spite of your wishes and fears, you are the same in moral character that you ever were; and while you are neglecting the great interests of your soul, time is bearing you on. As your sins multiply your opportunities of repentance are diminished. Soon the fatal summons will come, and you must stand at the tribunal of your judge; and you are going as an unpardoned sinner to meet him there.

3. WHAT MUST BECOME OF ME AT LAST? I

know that I must die, and that after death is the judgment. What will be my condition then? To this the Word of God replies that if you do not turn from the path of death, you must perish. This fatal end of impenitence is presented to our view under the similitude of death. As this is the most fearful of all the natural evils which here threaten us, God makes use of it in his Word as a symbol of the misery occasioned by sin, and represents the soul as forever suffering in hell the agonies of dissolution, and yet incapable of death.

The most striking emblems in nature are selected in the Word of God, to impress us with the misery occasioned by sin. It is compared to the horrid agony produced by the gnawing of a worm on the living flesh; for, said our Saviour "their worm dieth not." "Darkness" is another emblem of this misery; hell is described as a place of "outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." "Fire" is another emblem used with a similar intent; and hell is represented as a place of fire and brimstone, where the smoke of the torments of the wicked ascendeth up forever and ever.

These scriptural emblems are all designed to convey to us an impression of that dreadful state of misery into which the impenitent fall after death. We are thus given to understand, that the suffer-

ings of the lost exceed everything that we have ever known of suffering. Do you then ask, what will finally become of me? Receive the testimony of God on this subject; you must be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." You may not now fear this result; but it will surely come. Eternity spreads itself out before you as a world of accumulated horrors; and to this you are fast approaching. Ages and ages will pass away; but to eternity there is no limit. All the years that can be added together or conceived cannot diminish aught from eternity; for from an unending duration all the periods of time that can be subtracted will not in the least degree reduce the mighty sum.

And do you purpose still to press on in the broad road to death, refusing to humble yourself before God, and rejecting his mercy? That kind and gracious Being sees the imminence of your peril, and from his throne in heaven bids you turn. The most exalted and glorious being in the universe interests himself in your welfare, and warns you of your danger. Lo! the ground on which you stand trembles, the awful gulf is just before you, the shades of night are closing around you, and you know not but that another step will plunge you down never more to rise. And how, heaven

is moved with compassion, and a message reaches you from the eternal God, bidding you turn from this way of death, or you are lost. Will you heed this admonition? Do you say, to-morrow I will? Why presume upon to-morrow, when this very night your soul may receive its summons to the tribunal of its final judge? Why delay, when by such procrastination you may grieve away the Holy Spirit, and prepare yourself for a wretched and hopeless end?

A man for whom the prayers of an affectionate wife had been daily offered, and in whose religious welfare many had interested themselves, continued to live in disobedience of the call of God. In the midst of life, he was taken ill with a disease which threatened to bear him to the grave; and then, the thought of his wasted privileges, and the hopeless condition of his soul, seemed to overwhelm him. As I approached his bedside, he reached forth both his hands and seized my arm, while with tremulous earnestness, his voice husky with apprehension, he besought me to save him. O, said he, is there no hope? I cannot die as I am. O, save me, saye me, was his earnest cry. It was in vain that I pointed him to one who is able and willing to save, for such was the state of mind produced by a foreboding of death, and such the terrors awakened in view of the coming

judgment, that he could not think collectedly ; and instead of making an intelligent surrender of himself to God through a Saviour, he continued like one beating the air, to call for mercy till he died. I then remembered what is written for our instruction in the sacred oracles, " Because I have called and ye refused ; I have stretched forth my hand and no man regarded ;—when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you ; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me."

Do not, by neglecting the heavenly call, jeopard your eternal happiness. Let it be your fixed purpose, now, to choose God as your portion, and to seek him with all your heart until you find him. I know that you will never press into the path of life, unless in consequence of such a determination. Let it then express the full purpose of your soul to say, O my neglected God, I now choose thee as the object of my supreme affection, and am determined to seek thee until I find thee. O strengthen in me this solemn purpose, and enable me through thy grace, to come to the Saviour, and to attain the glorious inheritance of the saints in heaven. Show me *the Path of Life*, that, guided by thy Spirit,

I may walk therein, and enter at last into thy presence, "where there is fullness of joy," and to "thy right hand," where "there are pleasures for evermore."

CHAPTER II.

THE TRUE POSITION OF MAN AS A MORAL BEING, UNDER THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

WHEN our first parents sinned, they broke the law of their Maker, and fell under its condemnation. But ere the sentence was pronounced, an event occurred in heaven, which had an important bearing on the future destinies of the race. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, offered to become incarnate, to suffer and die as an atoning sacrifice, and so to magnify the law through his sufferings, that, consistently with its integrity, pardon might be freely extended to sinful but repentant man. In consequence of this merciful design, the execution of the penalty was stayed, a respite granted, pardon, on repentance, offered, and full remission of sins to all who should turn unto God through faith in the great Redeemer; and that this plan of mercy might be successfully accomplished, the government of the world was transferred to Christ, who is to reign till the whole world shall be subdued by the power of his victorious grace.

By this arrangement the curse was not removed

from our first parents, but only its execution suspended ; and a respite was granted, to allow the provisions of mercy to take effect. The promise was graciously made, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. One descended from her should in due time arise, who should conquer the great enemy of the race, and through whom the guilty world might be recovered from the apostacy. Pardon and eternal life were to be freely offered in his name ; and, through faith in him, sinners, though deserving of eternal death, might return to God in humble penitence, and be restored to the holiness and bliss of Eden.

This was to be effected by our Saviour, through the voluntary offering of himself on the cross as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men. It was necessary that such a sacrifice should be provided, that God might preserve his law inviolate, and yet extend mercy to all who should receive and rest by faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Saviour. The system of grace, thus arranged in the counsels of the divine wisdom, commenced its operation immediately after the apostacy ; and, though the Saviour had not yet come and suffered, yet it being immutably fixed in the purposes of Jehovah that he should, his atoning sacrifice became, even then, as effectual to salvation as if it had already been offered up. For four thousand

years, the blessings of this plan of grace were enjoyed by the world ; and then, when the fullness of time had come, Jesus, the great High Priest, appeared, to put away sin by the offering of himself. When on the cross, he bowed his head in death, crying " It is finished ;" the mighty work was done. Multitudes, who, in anticipation of his sufferings, were already in glory, saw the object of their adoration expire as a malefactor, knowing at the same time that but for this sacrifice their own seats in heaven must have been vacant, and their songs of praise exchanged for groans of sorrow and despair. They saw the prophecies fulfilled in him, and the efficacy of his atoning blood reaching back to the apostacy of man, and forward to Christ's second coming.

What would have been the destiny of the race, had our first parents stood their trial, can only be conjectured ; what it has become in consequence of their apostacy, is evident. The records of inspired truth teach, that " all have sinned ;" that all mankind partake of the sin, and are exposed to the ruin consequent on depravity ; and that our fallen and sinful race are under the same condemnation under which they would have been if Jesus had not died. The curse is suspended, not removed ; and the day of grace is the period of respite, during which, the gospel proffers forgive-

ness and eternal life to those who come by faith to the Saviour. All mankind are under condemnation ; all are ruined by sin ; and if they fail, through Jesus Christ to escape into the path of life, they must perish without remedy.

The Gospel describes the position of impenitent sinners under the divine government as eminently dangerous. They are regarded as lost, like one bewildered in a forest, who cannot find his way out. He who pursues a course of conduct tending inevitably to his ruin, is said to be a lost man. So the man who gives himself up to ruinous intoxication, and who can be led by no motive to abandon his wicked course, is said to be lost. And when the sinner, already under condemnation, continues to press on in the path of disobedience, he is said to be lost. By this is not meant that unconverted sinners are already cast away, and by an irrevocable sentence separated from God and heaven, but only that they are in that moral state in which, if they do not repent, they must inevitably perish. They are "condemned already," and the sentence is suspended over them ready to be executed. But they enjoy a merciful respite, and the proffer of forgiveness and acceptance through faith in Jesus. In such a condition it is natural to speak of them as lost. Thus our Saviour says, respecting the object of his mission to

earth, that "the Son of Man is come to seek and save them that are lost." Not that the sinner is already cast away; but that he has so ruined himself by his sins that he would instantly sink to hell, if God should end his forbearance, and withdraw his supporting hand. He is in a ruined state, and death only is needed to make that ruin complete. He need not commit one more sin, nor utter one more blasphemy, nor again turn away from the sacramental table; all that he needs to do, to reach a state of final and everlasting exclusion from the presence of the Lord, is to continue as he is, impenitent, till his day of grace shall have passed away, and then he will sink under the weight of unforgiven sin to final and everlasting perdition.

This, if you are unconverted, is your true position as a moral being under the divine government. The sins which condemn you have been already committed, and the law demands your punishment. But, through the Gospel, you have a respite, and an opportunity to escape this condemnation, by faith in the Saviour who died for you. He it is who now bids you come to him. He would have you confide in him, take hold on his hand, and follow him: and he will guide you into the path of life.

And here it is that God meets you in his mercy

and bids you turn. The path in which you tread leads to death. And the danger in your case is, that you will continue to press on in this path, heedless of invitations and of warning. Multitudes have delayed repentance till it was too late. Let it not be so with you. Do not put off the period of your return to God. Not only resolve, but go forward and put that resolution into practice. Give yourself no rest till you find Christ, and he becomes your great deliverer.

CHAPTER III.

NATURAL CHARACTER ILLUSTRATED.

PERHAPS you think, that though condemned by the divine law, you will escape its curse, because you are so moral that God will release you on this account from its penalty. This is a common error. It is important to expose its fallacy. For this purpose, and to illustrate the natural character of man before his conversion, permit me to introduce to your notice one who once stood on the same ground with yourself, and who discovered that it was fatally defective. Paul, before he became a Christian, had a reputation for morality, which even his enemies acknowledged to be just.

1. HE WAS AN UPRIGHT MAN. His moral character was unimpeachable. When arraigned before Felix by his countrymen they were unable to say anything against him. On account of his high standing as a man of integrity, conscientiously devoted to the service of God, he was appointed by the council of his nation to apprehend and put to death the teachers of the Christian religion.

And when he had embraced this religion, and was persecuted on this account, he appealed to his life as evidence of his moral standing, even in the judgment of his enemies. "My manner of life, from my youth up, which was at first among my own nation, know all the Jews, who knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." Probably there are few persons whose moral character would not suffer by a comparison with that of Paul. There are few who are not conscious of having committed some sin ; few who have not done what they themselves judge to be wrong ; few who have nothing to reproach themselves with, or who can say, with Paul, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

2. HE WAS A VERY RELIGIOUS MAN. It could not be said of him, as of many who claim the merit of moral goodness, that he lived without prayer ; for as a Pharisee, eminent for his religious zeal, he must have been pre-eminent in this duty. We may be sure that the hour of prayer never came without finding him engaged in his devotions. In this respect he was very different from many in this age, who live without ever bending the knee at the throne of grace.

He was not only prayerful in his life, but was

very sincere in his belief. "I verily thought," said he, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." In the religious system to which he adhered, he had full confidence. It did not satisfy him to be merely confident in his opinions, but he was active and zealous in sustaining them. It would be difficult to find among the disciples of Christ, in any age, a higher regard for the external duties of religion, greater conscientiousness, or more ardent zeal ; and we may look in vain for such a character among the crowd of moralists who throng the Christian sanctuary.

3. HE EMINENTLY ENJOYED THE BENEFITS RESULTING FROM HIS HIGH STANDING. Unreproved by conscience as to the general tenor of his life, unconscious of gross departures from his duty, he felt satisfied that he was an object of the divine favor. He had a peaceful conscience, and an unwavering hope of the divine acceptance. Nor did he believe that God would be so unjust as to punish one so upright and religious as he was, and who enjoyed such peace of mind. This was before his conversion.

But when brought to view himself in the mirror of the divine law, and to behold that law in its spirituality and power, he saw how deceived he had been, and his hope fled. "When the command-

ment came," he said, "sin revived, and I died." But what had Paul done to produce this conviction of his lost estate? Had he been guilty of murder, adultery, theft, or falsehood? Had he taken the name of God in vain, and desecrated his holy Sabbath? No. How then could the law slay his hope? Ah, my impenitent friend, it showed him his heart. It taught him that he had hitherto lived only to himself, and that his pretended zeal for God was only a zeal for his own elevation in the estimation of the Jewish nation. His hopes had all centred in himself. His prayers had been offered out of a supreme regard to himself only; and his religious zeal had arisen, not from a desire for the glory of God, but to make himself known, and to spread his popularity far and wide. His heart was not right in the sight of God. Are you not conscious that you have sinned in this respect? Have you not been living to yourself, and neglecting God?

No sooner was Paul made sensible of his sin, by the application of the divine law to his conscience, than he felt that he was lost. O what a change was then wrought in his views of his own character! His anticipations of heaven, founded on his own goodness, all vanished when he came to understand the nature of true holiness. A deathlike palsy struck his soul; hope, despairing, fled, and he fell

to the earth in deep amazement and horror, crying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

If the upright, sincere, and exemplary Paul could not be saved by his morality, can you hope to be? Can you pretend to be better than he? Are you more religious and more zealous toward God than he was? If the law of God, when properly apprehended, slew his hope of heaven, what must become of you, when you shall stand, convicted by this law, at the dread tribunal of Jesus Christ?

Could not Paul be saved by his morality and his prayers? How then can you be saved, who have no such morality to plead, and who are prayerless? That law which you have already broken, condemns you. A dark and threatening cloud rises over you. The lightning's flash and the deep rolling thunder foretell your doom. And you have no Saviour in whom to trust, and who may prove to you a refuge from the storm now ready to burst upon your guilty head!

CHAPTER IV.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

THAT state of mind in which we should approach God to obtain forgiveness, is called conviction. This ordinarily precedes conversion. It is important to have a clear view of this subject, to avoid being misled as to the way of acceptance with God.

1. WHAT IS CONVICTION? It is a feeling of conscious guilt and unworthiness, such as led the publican to smite upon his breast, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" This consciousness of guilt arises from the knowledge of our own sinfulness. Our first parents in their innocence had no such consciousness, because they were not sinners. But when they had disobeyed God, fear took possession of their minds, and they fled into the thicket, and hid themselves from the presence of their injured Maker.

Though he who has not sinned cannot have a consciousness of guilt, yet one may be a sinner, and yet not feel himself to be guilty. He may know that he has sinned, and yet not feel that sense of ill-desert which the publican felt, when he stood in deep humility before God. He may

have knowledge without conviction; may be a sinner without being a convicted sinner. Though conviction cannot exist without a knowledge of our own sinfulness, yet there may be knowledge without conviction. The sinner may be disposed to justify his sin, rather than acknowledge it; but not if he is convicted. The natural tendency of a heart oppressed with a sense of its ill-desert, is to abandon all attempts at self-justification, and to come in humble acknowledgment of its offences before the throne of divine mercy, pleading for pardon.

Conviction is often modified by the peculiar circumstances of the case, and is more or less painful as it is awakened in the view of God's anger, or of the innate evil and odiousness of sin. The experience of many eminent Christians varies on this subject. But all sinners, when convicted, feel sensible of their ill-desert. They have such views of the divine justice and holiness, as to feel that if God should cast them away forever he would be just. This sense of their own vileness and desert of punishment is different from that feeling of alarm which springs only from the fear of punishment. The condemned felon may feel a terror at the prospect of his approaching execution, and yet not have any proper sense of the heinousness of that crime for which he is to lose his life

These two classes of feeling are often mistaken for each other. Alarm is often mistaken for conviction. But it is a very different feeling. It leads one to be solicitous merely to escape from punishment, not from sin. As it does not spring from a sense of ill-desert, neither does it lead to Christ as a Saviour from sin. It wakens a desire to be free from danger, and leads the sinner, often, to cry mightily to God for mercy. But it does not lead him in true humility and confession to Christ. If he retire to pray, it is not to take his true position, as a sinner, before God, and to ask understandingly, for the sake of Christ, the pardon of his sins; but to utter cries for mercy, and that he may be saved from hell, in the hope that he will be saved for the merit of his supplications. He thus seeks, but it is not in the right way. He knocks, but it is not at mercy's door. And after a few ineffectual efforts to obtain peace, he desponds. He begins to doubt the truth of the Gospel. He yields to some enticement of error; and without making an open avowal of his disbelief, he sits year after year a hearer of the Word, having no hope but that which will perish when God shall take away the soul.

But he who is truly convicted, is sensible that without the pardon of his sins he cannot be happy; and that if he were permitted to enter heaven, his

heart unchanged, it would be no heaven to him. It is the thought of his own vileness which troubles him; and while oppressed with this thought, he hears the Gospel, and it is glad tidings to him. He hears of one who died upon the cross for sinners, and feels that he is just the Saviour that he needs. He feels that he has nothing to plead in extenuation of his guilt, and he cheerfully accepts, by faith, that Saviour. Whatever difficulties may be in the way to Him, he will cheerfully overcome them.

2. HOW MAY THIS STATE OF MIND BE ATTAINED?

It is only through a perception of the excellence and holiness of God, that you can gain a knowledge of your sinfulness, and be led to feel your ill-desert. The eternal rectitude of Jehovah, viewed in connection with your own departure from duty and your numerous transgressions of the divine law, naturally tends to excite in you conviction. The Bible reveals the stainless purity of his character, and the perfect moral excellence of his law.

God, your Creator, is infinitely wise, holy, just and good. Hence your obligation, as a creature, to love him. To treat ungratefully a kind benefactor, is base; to betray the country that hath given you birth, is hateful; to injure and grieve a kind parent, is more odious still. But to treat

God with neglect, the being to whom you owe your life, health, friends, and all the blessings you enjoy, is a sin infinitely heinous. It is a crime of deeper dye than to violate your obligations to every earthly benefactor, to friends, or to country. To these you owe much; but to God you owe everything.

If it is an offence so heinous to sin against God, what punishment does sin deserve? All offences deserve a punishment proportioned to their magnitude. A small offence merits an inferior punishment, and one of infinite criminality a punishment that shall be infinite. The injurious treatment of a benefactor may demand exclusion from his society; the injury resulting from the betrayal of our country may demand banishment or death; and on the same principle, the injury done by sin to the divine government may demand the separation of the sinner from God so long as the soul shall live. And this accords with the testimony of the Saviour, that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment.

The punishment due to a sin that is infinitely heinous because committed against a holy God, is proportional to the crime. If an offence against our country deserve banishment or death, how much more does one committed against the Infinite Sovereign of the universe? Every sin is de-

serving of banishment from God forever. And if one sin deserve this, what does a life of sin deserve, every day of which has been spent in constant transgressions?

Conviction includes not only a general knowledge of the heinousness of sin, but a perception of our own individual sinfulness; and it is by a faithful comparison of ourselves with the law of God, that this is gained. If this law demand of you perfect love, then you may perceive your own sinfulness by observing how your affections have gone after the world in preference to him; in what higher estimation you have held its pleasures, and how much more it has occupied your thoughts. On a review of your past life, you may perceive in how many instances you have knowingly and deliberately sinned, in what neglect of God you have lived, how often you have violated your conscience, resisted the Holy Spirit, repelled serious impressions, and rejected the offered salvation. It may show you that in all your life past you have been turning away from God, hating his authority, murmuring against his providence, profaning his Sabbath, and spurning his grace.

When you begin thus to see what a sinner you are, then read from the Word of God the startling annunciation that the carnal mind is enmity against him; and the truth, like an arrow from

the quiver of the Almighty, may pierce your heart. No sooner can you turn your thoughts to the contemplation of the divine character, and begin to inquire what you are, than conviction will be awakened in your soul ; or, if not conviction, that knowledge of your sinfulness which is indispensable to it.

The way to attain conviction, then, is to begin in earnest to seek God. Let one endeavor to draw nigh to him in prayer, study his word, attend on his ordinances, and put himself in the way of religious impression ; and having resolved never to relinquish his endeavors till he shall feel the peace of pardoned sin, let him give his whole soul to the work of turning unto God ; and in proportion as he shall perceive the excellence and holiness of the great Jehovah, will he have humbling views of himself, and be filled with such a sense of his ill-desert, as to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, " I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Many fail of such impressions, in consequence of their habitual neglect of Jehovah. They turn away from him, choose the world as their portion, and yet wonder that they do not feel a greater interest in their personal salvation. They do not see that they themselves prevent serious impressions being made upon their minds, by their thoughtless and inconsistent course : and that by

neglecting to seek God, they put themselves beyond the reach of his forgiving mercy. If you would discover your own character, begin at once to seek after God. Not only determine to seek him until you find him, but arise and go unto your Father, confessing your sins. Never can you become sensible of your ill-desert, while you remain at a distance from him. It is only when you draw nigh to him, and through the operation of the Holy Spirit on your heart, get a clear perception of his holiness, that you will find out how vile you are. At his feet you will learn, that amid the mercies of heaven, you have been thankless ; that you are unworthy of his notice ; that if he should send your guilty soul to hell, he would be just ; and that it becomes you to cast yourself down into the dust before him, crying, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." "Lord, save me, I perish."

CHAPTER V.

THE VAIN ENDEAVORS OF ONE AWAKENED TO RE- INSTATE HIMSELF IN THE DIVINE FAVOR BY HIS OWN GOOD WORKS.

THE first and most natural resort of a convinced sinner, to obtain peace of mind, is to his own self-righteousness. The plan which he forms to escape the curse of sin, includes his prayers, tears, good resolutions, and promises, as the basis of his hope of acceptance. He feels that, as he has sinned against God, he must do something pleasing to him to secure his favor. Accordingly, he purposes to lead a different life from that he has hitherto led, to read the sacred Scriptures more frequently, to attend divine worship oftener, and, perhaps, to enter his closet and pray. All this he does on the principle of making himself better than he is, and with a view to become so good that he may presently hope that he has become a Christian. The thought uppermost in his mind is, that to commend himself to the divine approbation he need only cultivate the good feelings of his nature, by devotional exercises and by acts of charity and mercy. He thus expects to be saved

for what he is, or for what he is to become, through his own unaided efforts. This plan to escape the curse of sin, has no relation to Christ as an atoning Saviour, and must fail, because it leaves him entirely out of view as the ground of justification, while it bases one's hope of heaven on his own merits.

On the same false principle, instructions are sometimes given to inquiring sinners which lead them directly into this fatal error, and to build their hope of acceptance with God on their own works. They are told, when asking what they must do to be saved, "to use the means of grace," by which is meant, that they must read the Bible, attend church, and pray ; and they are encouraged in the expectation that in so doing they will become Christians. The study of the sacred Scriptures, prayer, and attendance upon public worship, are imperative duties, which none may neglect ; but the direction to perform them is no proper answer to the question. The thought which the troubled mind eagerly seizes on is, that in obeying this direction he is doing something acceptable to God ; and the natural tendency of it is to build one up in self-righteousness, but not to lead him to Christ. In like manner, also, is one often told to "persevere in the use of the means of grace, and all will come out right at

last;" by which the convicted sinner is given to understand that he is doing something good and acceptable to God, and if he only continue in this course long enough, he will be saved. Such instructions tend to lead the sinner away from Christ, and to build his hope on a foundation of sand, which the storms of the last day will assuredly sweep away. The mistake consists in the assumption, that there is something good in his prayers and promises, and that they are a ground on which he may reasonably expect that God will bless him. Whereas, there dwelleth in him, as a rebel against God, no good thing. All his prayers and promises emanate from a principle of selfishness, nor do they spring in any degree from love to God. He who thus seeks his salvation is doing nothing in this way, but continuing to press on in the path of death; and if he should "persevere," he must inevitably perish. Prayers and promises, good resolutions and acts of charity, are important in their place, but they constitute no proper basis for the sinner's hope. Instead of being told to persevere in the use of such means, he should be told to stop in his mad career of ruin, to abandon all hope of acceptance by his own righteousness, and to submit himself to God, trusting in Jesus Christ and his atoning blood alone, for justification.

So great is the danger of mistake on this point, and so fatal is the mistake, that it is of great importance clearly to perceive that you cannot escape the curse of sin by your own self-righteous efforts, and why such efforts must be unavailing. The state of the unconverted sinner is one in which he loves himself supremely. He loves nothing in the universe in preference to himself; not even God. He measures the value of everything around him by its adaptedness to promote his own happiness. He loves the world just so far as it is instrumental in promoting his pleasures; and he loves God in the same manner. Just so far as God is good to him, and is the source of his mercies, he feels a pleasure in him. When he rises in the morning refreshed with sleep, walks forth in the light of the pleasant sun, and sees the evidences of God's goodness in the sunshine and rain sent to adorn the earth, or advance his crops, he feels a kind of elation of heart, and he loves God; but it is only so far as he conceives that the agency of the divine hand is displayed for his benefit. In other words, he loves himself supremely, and loves God no further than his power is made subservient to his own happiness; and this is supreme selfishness. This love to God is not for his divine excellence, but his gifts, for the excellent crops he sends to feed the sel-

fish sinner, or for the natural beauty to gratify his taste. And this is the only kind of love to God ever felt by the unconverted man. It may change into the most bitter enmity in a moment, and will thus change so soon as the sinner is made to feel that God is above him, and he must submit to him or perish. Hence it is said that the "carnal mind is enmity against God;" not that this enmity is always active, but that the natural state of the unconverted soul is one in which this spirit of enmity may be at any moment developed. For if the sinner love himself supremely, all that is needed to develop this spirit of hatred toward God, is to have the sinner feel that God is no longer the instrument of his happiness, but is his eternal Sovereign, whom he must obey. The moment that he feels that God's will crosses his own, and that he must submit to the will of God or perish, then his enmity rises, and the spirit of his carnal nature becomes developed in all its malignant forms.

The great point gained in conversion, is the entire submission of the sinner to God through Jesus Christ; and the difficulty with the prayers and promises of one awakened is, that they do not reach this point. One may continue this use of the means of grace forever, and yet never reach the point of unconditional surrender of the will

and heart to God. On this account, such instructions must fail to direct the sinner aright.

Besides, these prayers and promises of the sinner are all prompted by a supreme regard to himself ; not by love to God for his own intrinsic excellence. They are only a development of his selfish desire after his own happiness ; not of his desire for the divine glory. They are the exhibitions of one who would escape the rod, not of one who feels that he is wrong, and desires to hate that wrong, because it is ingratitude to a God whom he sincerely loves. There is nothing morally good therefore in any of the endeavors of the sinner to escape the curse of sin, or those which are made by him for the purpose of pleasing God. All are selfish and unholy. Nor can the sinner, till he yield himself up through faith in the Redeemer, do anything which God will regard with approbation, and as a ground of conferring his blessing.

The mistake most often made, and against which you should carefully guard, is in supposing that one can improve his own moral state, by good resolutions, prayers, and tears of penitence, and make himself so good that he shall gain the path of life by his own unaided efforts, and irrespective of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Hence it is the constant effort of many who are misled on this point,

to make themselves better, and to try to become so good that Christ will receive them, and acknowledge them as his disciples. But how good must you become, thus to enter into life? You must be wholly free from transgression. Not a sin must you commit, in thought and in deed, but you must become as holy as were our first parents before they fell. And if you could become thus holy, and so continue till the day of your death, would this save you? Do you see no fatal defect in this plan? Why would you not, on this account, be accepted of God? Because the sins of your past life would still remain, and for their forgiveness you would have made no provision. If you should live a perfectly holy life, you would do nothing more than is your duty. You could not, in this way, lay up a stock of merit to be applied to cancelling your former sins. Promising not to run in debt in future, even if the pledge should be redeemed, could not pay the debts already contracted; neither if you could make yourself better than you are, even as holy as the Saints in heaven, would it procure the remission of your past sins, for which you are already under condemnation.

What you need is forgiveness. You cannot obtain this, by efforts to make yourself better, nor by trusting in your own righteousness, but by hum-

bling yourself in true contrition before God, renouncing all dependence on yourself, and trusting in Christ alone as your atoning sacrifice.

But you cannot, if you would, make yourself better than you are, while you continue in rebellion against God. You may, indeed, break off some outward sins, and amend your life, but your heart you cannot amend. In vain will you strive to become holy in this way. And if you could, it would not save you. What you need is pardon; for unless you experience the pardoning mercy of God, you cannot behold his face in peace.

But how is this pardon to be obtained? Can you do anything to merit it? Could the prodigal son, when he returned to his father in rags, do anything to merit his pardon? If he had returned, exculpating himself, and promising future amendment, would his father have received him as he did? Would he not have justly suspected the sincerity of his conduct? But when he returned clothed in rags, and prostrated himself before his injured father, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," he did just what the circumstances of his case demanded. It was the way to obtain forgiveness; and the kind father clasped him in his arms, saying, "This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is

found." So must you return in true repentance to God, if you would experience his pardoning grace, and be clad in the Saviour's own robe of righteousness in the final day.

'Abandon, therefore, all thoughts of gaining the path of life through your own self-righteous efforts, and by trusting in the merit of your prayers and promises. Renounce all hope of making yourself better than you are, while you withhold your heart from God. But go to him in the humble confession of your sins, go in the spirit of a true penitent, turning from your own works of righteousness, and reposing your guilty soul on Christ alone, who hath died for your redemption, and who is "able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH CANNOT TAKE THE PLACE OF CHRIST AS A SAVIOUR.

MANY who inquire for the path of life, are led to place confidence in the church as able to save them. The impression under which they act is, that if they are baptized, are included in the number of professed Christians, and enjoy the benefit of the prayers and good offices of the church, they cannot be lost.

But it is clear from the sacred Scriptures, that merely to be associated with Christians, and participate with them in religious ordinances, cannot save the soul, because a person may do this, and yet his sinful heart be unchanged. That which the sinner needs is, the forgiveness of his sins and reconciliation with God. He needs a change in his spiritual affections, and an union with Christ by a living faith. But to become a member of the church, to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and carefully to observe all the outward ordinances of religion, will not give man a new heart, nor bring him into

a state of reconciliation with God. Religion consists not in the performance of external duties only, but in those right affections which lead to their performance ; for, said our Saviour, " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And said the apostle, " To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." That is, there must be as great a change in the spiritual state of man, that he may become a Christian, as there could be in his outward state, were he to be born into a new world.

One alarmed by anticipations of future punishment may flee into the church, and imagine that in the observance of its ordinances he is safe ; when not love to God, but only a selfish fear, inspires his external obedience. This fear may be the only motive of his piety ; and the performance of duties prompted by it cannot be pleasing to God. To fast and pray, to devote one's property to religious uses, and to seek a refuge in the church, from such a motive, are all acts of self-righteousness which have no saving virtue.

Many fast out of a conscientious regard for what they have been taught, and believe that such self-mortification tends to save their souls ; many pray from the same cause ; many aim to do

what their religious instructors tell them is right, and imagine themselves to be spiritually safe. But there is no promise of forgiveness to those who trust in the performance of these duties. There is no assurance of their acceptance with God. It is in "the broken and contrite heart" only that he delights. It is to the believing and obedient that he imparts the adoption of sons. Nor is it in the power of any church or minister of the Gospel to do for you what is necessary to your salvation. It is at the feet of Christ only that you can receive forgiveness; there only can you find eternal life.

Often are religious inquirers, by false instructions, misled in their attempts to find and walk in the path to heaven. Instead of being taught to search the Scriptures for themselves, they have been taught to receive implicitly what their religious teachers inculcate, to confide in what their church teaches, and to feel safe in so doing. But this will not save you. Christ cannot become your Saviour unless you personally know and love him. To come to him in the way of the Gospel, you must look beyond the church, the ministry, and the ordinances, to him as the Saviour of sinners.

One who had been, from his youth, instructed in the false views of a formal church, when con-

vinced of his sinfulness, resorted to the use of all the means that his religious teachers enjoined. He fasted, prayed, observed the rites of his church, and strove by a careful observance of prescribed forms, to find peace. But he was unsuccessful. He then connected himself with another church, and in its communion sought ease for his troubled mind, but found none. He then separated himself from the world, became a hermit and the inhabitant of a desert, that he might devote himself to a life of humiliation and prayer. But he found no relief. At length, solicited by a friend, he presented himself in the attitude of an inquirer to a gospel missionary who understood the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. He heard from him a delineation of the simple plan of salvation through "repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," and his spiritual eyes were opened. He wondered that he had not before seen the difficulties of his case, and that he had not been taught this "new and living way." He became sensible of his error, received the truth, yielded his heart up to God through the Saviour, and his burdened soul instantly found relief.

Many who are anxious to find the way of life, fall into the same error, and trust in their church relations, instead of the Saviour. They seek baptism,

to the neglect of that spiritual renovation of which it is significant. They trust in the repetition of their prayers, instead of trusting in the great object of prayer, Jesus Christ. They confide in fasting, and in obedience to the prescribed forms of their church, instead of looking by faith to its Spiritual Head, who only can take away their sin. Thus they wander in the dark, unobservant of the plain directions of the prophet, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." They are regardless of the Saviour's directions, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

While he who comes to the Saviour by faith, will earnestly desire a union with the church, that he may thereby be aided in his religious life, yet it is not the church which saves, but Christ. The church is an association of those who profess to love and obey the Saviour. Those who compose the church, cannot save themselves, much less can they save others. The church and the ministry have no power to inspire the sinner with faith. All are dependent for salvation on Christ alone. It is the sacred Scriptures, only which

point out the true way of life ; and it is the duty of every one to " search the Scriptures," to press forward in the way revealed by them, repenting of his sins, and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. This he may do at once, and, at the throne of grace, plead the merit of the great atoning sacrifice as the only ground of his hope. " It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ;" and " whosoever cometh unto me," the blessed Saviour has said, " I will in no wise cast out."

As he gave his life for sinners, when he bled for them on the cross, they may draw nigh to him in prayer, with holy confidence that he will never turn away his mercy from those who humbly seek him, nor leave them without a blessing. They may approach him in their closets, confessing their sins, and yielding up to him their hearts. Nor will they love the church less for thus loving Christ. But they will not love it as a Saviour, nor trust in it for their salvation ; for, with the disciple Peter, they will say, " Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PATH OF LIFE OPENED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

AWARE of the futility of the sinner's efforts to gain the favor of God by his works of self-righteousness, Jesus Christ, God's only Son, consented to come into the world and die upon the cross, as an atoning sacrifice, for the sake of which we might be forgiven. Accordingly, when the fullness of time had come, Jesus Christ appeared to put away sin, by the offering of himself, "that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth;" and that "whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

This offering was made, that the divine law might sustain no injury or neglect by the forgiveness of the penitent. The law claims that the guilty sinner shall die under its curse; but Jesus Christ took this curse upon himself, and by dying in the sinner's stead, was enabled to forgive his sins, and spare him the endurance of the curse, having been made a curse for him. Having, by his death, thus met the demands of the law, and having suffered under it, he is able to release the

sinner from his penalty, and to restore him to the divine favor, himself becoming his surety. And such is the infinite dignity of the Son of God, and such the value of his sacrifice, that God can accept his obedience and death, as a full equivalent for the eternal sufferings of all who by faith accept this Saviour, as their great deliverer. That is, the death of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, effects the same purposes of moral government, that the punishment of those who believe in him would have done, had they been left to perish. It as fully vindicates the law, and sustains it, as just in its demands, and just in its threatened punishment; and in this way, by not sparing his own Son, but giving him up to death in place of the sinner, God shows the world that he regards his law as just, and that he is determined to sustain it: and, if he would not spare his own Son, when he had voluntarily taken the sinner's place in suffering, that he will not spare any sinner who refuses to avail himself of the mercy offered him through Christ.

The law is therefore magnified and made honorable, by Christ's sufferings and death, and no man may dare to impugn its claims, or presume that it may be set aside in his favor, if he continue to neglect the salvation offered him in the Gospel. You may not, therefore, presume to live and die

impenitent, because the law has become a dead letter. On the contrary, you see what it has done to Christ, and that even God's own Son could not escape its wrath when he had voluntarily taken the sinner's place; how then can you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?

Instead of being destroyed, the perpetual obligation of the law has become strengthened by the atoning sacrifice, and the faith required to make it efficacious. And this is the conclusion of the apostle, when he says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." The law, in the view of the universe, is stronger this day, and more imperishable, than if Christ had not died. It is preserved in its priceless integrity; and yet, through the death of Christ, a way is opened to take away its curse from all who avail themselves of the offered mercy. God is honored in the forgiveness of the sinner, in the way proposed in the Gospel, and the highest glory is conferred on our great Deliverer.

The scriptural testimonies are ample to the point, that Christ's obedience and sufferings were in the room of the eternal sufferings of all who believe in him; that he was their substitute. "He died for us," says the apostle. "He is the propitiation for our sins;" "he was made a curse for us;"

"we are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ;" "for without the shedding of blood there is no remission;" Christ hath "redeemed us by his blood." This is but a small part of the divine testimony expressly to the point.

If you say that Christ did not suffer in the place of those who are saved, because he did not endure that penalty of sin which consists in a troubled conscience and the pains of hell forever, and ask how could his obedience and death take the place of such a penalty; I reply, that Christ suffered all that a perfectly innocent being could. If a holy being should be sent to hell, it would be no place of misery to him, for he would make its dungeons resound with songs of praise to God. Christ suffered no remorse; for his pure and holy mind was incapable of remorse; but he suffered such untold agonies while under the frown of God on the cross, that the sweat burst from him as it had been great drops of blood falling to the ground; and he cried out in the deep anguish of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

These sufferings, in consequence of his divine nature, were of infinite value, and under the divine government effect the same purposes that the punishment of the redeemed would have done. They

are a full equivalent to this punishment, and by the divine arrangement are accepted in its place. They are of infinite merit, and sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world. Hence Jesus Christ is called "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." So that every sinner on earth, and in all ages, may feel that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and is ample in merit for every sinner of the race. Not that all will avail themselves of its benefits, but that it is so ample in its efficacy to take away sin, that even those who perish can never plead any want of infinitude in the merit of the Redeemer's sacrifice, as the ground of their exclusion from mercy.

All has been done by Christ in the way of atonement that is needed for any sinner, so that it is not to make atonement for his sins, which is required of him, but to accept Christ by faith as the atoning Saviour. The heart is rectified by its acceptance of Christ; for no one can approach the Saviour through faith, and not hate those sins which nailed the Saviour to the cross, and turn from them in true repentance. Hence it is that the Gospel directs its motives and influences to the heart, to subdue it by the power of that love dis-

played on Calvary. No sooner does the convicted sinner look by faith upon the once crucified Redeemer, than his heart is broken, the spirit of enmity is changed to love, and the spiritual image of his Maker, lost in the great apostacy, is restored to his soul.

While you relinquish as hopeless, therefore, your endeavors to commend yourself to the divine favor by your own works of righteousness, behold in Christ an open door, through which the wanderer may turn into the path of life! While you cast away any dependence on your prayers and promises, on your tears of contrition, and your own imagined goodness, cast yourself by faith into the arms of the great Redeemer, and you will be saved.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANXIOUS INQUIRER DIRECTED INTO THE PATH OF LIFE.

How am I to begin the work of my salvation ? is an inquiry often made with great earnestness by one who feels the burden of his sins. It is the same in substance with the question asked by the jailer of Paul and Silas, when he brought them out of prison, fell down at their feet, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?" Often has this inquiry been awakened in the anxious sinner's mind, when there was no one at hand to give a suitable answer, or to guide his trembling steps to the Saviour. Bunyan describes his future pilgrim as in a state of deep mental distress, so that when he walked in the fields to find a place of retirement where he could unburden his soul before God, he cried out, in the words of the jailer, "What must I do to be saved ?" While in this state, he was met by a Christian minister, who taught him what he must do, pointing out to him the way of life through Jesus Christ.

When in this state of mind, one is in a most critical condition. If he repress his serious

thoughts, mingle with the world, banish his religious impressions, and grieve away the Holy Spirit, he is in danger of final perdition. If he be directed improperly, he may fail to come to Christ, and be led into fatal error. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to make the path of duty so plain, at this point, that none can mistake the way.

The inquiry proposed by one convicted of sin is, How can I begin the work of my salvation? To this we answer, by showing first in what ways—often adopted for this purpose, you cannot begin the work of your salvation; and by then pointing out the only way, which is through faith in Jesus Christ.

1. You cannot begin the work of your salvation by **INACTION**. You may feel solicitous respecting yourself, and wish that you were a Christian; but so long as you remain in a slumbering, indifferent state, and are doing nothing to secure an interest in Christ, you cannot enter on the path of life. The teachings of the sacred Scriptures show that the greatest diligence is demanded of all who would be saved. "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." "Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?" "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." "Work out your own salvation with fear

and trembling." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." These and other testimonies of the Word of God show that they who would secure their salvation through Jesus Christ must be in earnest to come unto him that they may be saved. Our Saviour compares this earnestness to the agony of those striving for the victory in feats of athletic skill, at the Grecian games, when he says, "Strive to enter in;" or in other words, more expressive of the intensity conveyed by the terms, agonize to enter in; as if he had said, Be in an agony of soul to obtain eternal life, and devote yourself with intense endeavors to press through the strait and narrow gate into the way of heaven.

2. You cannot begin the work of your salvation by TRUSTING IN THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU ARE WAITING GOD'S TIME. The state of mind in which you thus wait is one of disobedience to his commands. You think that you are waiting for God to operate on your heart by his Holy Spirit, when you are repelling his gracious operations, by clinging to the world yet longer, unwilling to give it up for Christ. While he is working in you to will and to do of his good pleasure, you turn away from him, and will not have him to reign over you. While he instructs, warns, invites, and strives with you, to bring you humble and penitent to his feet,

you live heedless of his mercy, pretending to wait for those operations of grace which he is constantly using with you, but to which you will give no heed. And, as if to offer a perpetual contradiction of the error into which you run, he has affirmed in the most emphatic manner, that "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" God's appointed time with every sinner under the Gospel is now; and there is to him no promise of acceptance which extends beyond the present moment.

3. You cannot begin the work of your salvation by DEPENDING ON GOOD RESOLUTIONS. These are naturally formed in the view of danger. The sick offer them to God constantly. The sailor, in a storm, or when clinging to a plank for safety, his ship having foundered and sunk, is profuse of his promises of amendment. And the convicted sinner, in the midst of his alarm, naturally promises God that he will love and serve him for the remainder of his life. But these promises are forgotten so soon as the sense of danger ceases to be longer felt. And yet they are often trusted in as something which God must approve, and for the sake of which he will do good to those who form such resolutions. As if to attempt to palm off on him a paltry vow, in place of true obedience, could be regarded by him in any other light than

as one of those refuges of lies, which the trial of the last day will sweep away.

4. Nor can you begin the work of your salvation by TRUSTING IN THE MEANS OF GRACE. It is your duty carefully to study the sacred Scriptures, to call on God for mercy and to seek him with the whole heart. "If thou criest after knowledge," says the Word of Life, "and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

But it is a fatal error to trust in these means as any thing meritorious, or which can procure the divine acceptance. To direct the inquirer to the use of such means, without pointing out to him distinctly the way to Christ and impressing him with the fact that nothing short of a union by faith with this Saviour will ever spiritually benefit him, is an error of great magnitude; and this error is often committed in the injudicious advice of Christian ministers and friends. The anxious inquirer is told that he must use the means of grace; by which he understands, that he must read his Bible, go to church, pray, and wait in this use of the means, as it is called, for the manifestation of God's converting grace.

If he do not find present relief, he is told that

he must persevere ; when it is evident that he may continue the formal observance of religious duties, such as he practises, till the day of his death, and yet never be saved. The tendency of such imperfect directions is, to lead him to trust in his use of means, as something which is pleasing to God, and for the sake of which mercy will be extended to him ; and to build him up in a self-righteous hope. They imply, that he is doing something pleasing to God, and that if he only do enough in this way, it will save his soul. Whereas, he must be led to see that he can do nothing by which he will merit the divine favor, but must come to Christ in all his sins, turn from them in repentance, and trust to the righteousness of Christ alone, for justification.

5. You cannot begin the work of your salvation by MAKING A PROFESSION OF RELIGION. There is no more connection between professing faith in Christ and possessing it, than between professing to be rich and being rich. You may be taught that if you would enjoy peace of mind, you must partake of the ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper, and make a public profession of religion. But of what use can it be thus to profess what you do not feel ? The mere pretence of being a Christian cannot make you a Christian ; and there is great danger, that one making a religious pro-

fession, in such circumstances, will rest upon it as something acceptable to God, and thus be prevented from coming by faith to Jesus Christ, and resting on him alone.

The use of the means of grace is highly important and proper but forms no just ground of the sinner's confidence. You ought to read the Bible, to attend church, and to pray; but you may do all these for a lifetime, without becoming religious.

6. You cannot commence the work of your salvation by WAITING FOR MORE FEELING AND MORE CONVICTION. It is a common error of the anxious inquirer to think that he must pass through a certain round of convictions and fears before he can come to Christ. Hence he supposes it to be necessary to wait till he feel more than he does the nature and intrinsic evil of sin, and until he is led by a kind of irresistible impulse to cast himself upon the divine mercy. But nothing can be more dangerous than such a supposition. It is only by coming to Christ, that a feeling of the right kind will be awakened; and one who sees his wickedness, and feels his need of pardoning mercy, has knowledge and conviction enough to turn in repentance unto God.

The real error here committed is one of self righteousness. The inquirer is led to believe that there is something meritorious or pleasing to God,

in those feelings of mental distress, occasioned by conviction of sin. But nothing can be more untrue. God has no delight in such distress ; but he has delight in the contrite and obedient heart. And if one should feel as deep and perpetual convictions as the lost in hell, and should weep and groan over his sins forever, it could not save him ; for never can he be saved till willing to yield himself up to God in humble faith.

7. You cannot begin the work of your salvation by **INDULGING DESPAIRING THOUGHTS OF GOD'S MERCY.** You may despair of your ability to atone for sin ; and the sooner you feel this kind of despair the better. But to despair of the mercy offered in the Gospel to the repentant, is a state of desperate unbelief the furthest from conversion. Some say that they cannot believe there is any salvation for them, for they have sinned away their day of grace and grieved the Holy Spirit to depart ; and they profess to believe this, when it is evident that it is only a mere pretence, to excuse their continued impenitence. Were they truly despairing, the terrors of hell would be visible in their very looks. There is nothing of this ; and all that they expect by such pretences is to gain sympathy from others on account of their supposed misfortune, and to have them think that they are in despair.

8. You cannot begin the work of your salvation by TRUSTING IN THE HOPE OF MAKING YOURSELF BETTER THAN YOU ARE, WHILE YOU CONTINUE TO WITHHOLD YOUR HEART FROM CHRIST. It is the first impulse of the anxious inquirer, in setting out to be a Christian, to try to make himself one by his good works ; and this, he thinks, is the way to enter into life. He feels that he is not good enough yet to go to Christ, and hopes, by means of religious duties, carefully observed, to make himself better ; so good even that Christ will acknowledge him as a disciple. He thus hopes to grow up into a Christian. The plan is a self-righteous one, and is widely different from that revealed in the Gospel.

Even if the inquirer could succeed in this plan, so far as to make himself as good as Adam was in innocence, and continue in this state of holiness till death, yet it would not save him ; because his obedience in future could not atone for his past sins. However holy he might become, he could not be saved unless his sins should be forgiven. If, while living in disobedience to the Gospel, one could make himself better than he is, yet it would not advance him a step toward the path of life. If, in future, he could avoid all sin, he would still be an unforgiven and condemned sinner.

But the idea of his attaining holiness while he

continues estranged from God, and in habitual transgression, is wholly imaginary. It would seem to imply that religious duties performed out of selfish motives, and not from love, are pleasing to God. In place of the duty demanded of him, of obeying Christ from the heart, the impenitent sinner ventures to substitute his own self-righteous plan; acting in this respect as the man with the withered hand, which Christ commanded him to stretch forth, would have done, had he said, "Lord, I will first try to make it better." The Saviour, in effect, responds, "You cannot, if you should try; all that you have to do is simply to obey me. Stretch forth your hand." Instead of complying with this direction, suppose the man to say, "Lord, I am doing all that I can to make it better; I have some excellent remedies which I mean to apply, and hope that it will soon be so well that I can obey you." How could entire distrust of Christ, and of his power to heal, be more clearly manifested than it would be in such a case?

The anxious inquirer often pursues a like inconsistent course. He is commanded in the Gospel to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved. But he excuses himself from obeying the command, by substituting a plan of his own, which he thinks preferable. Instead of coming to

Christ and casting himself by faith into his arms, he reads his Bible, attends the ministration of the Word, gives up posting his accounts, reading newspapers, or amusing himself, on the holy Sabbath, and thinks that he is rapidly growing good, and will soon be a Christian. Again, the command meets his eye, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." But he says, I will resolve to seek God, and will class myself with the inquiring; I will ask an interest in the prayers of the church; I will do the very best that I can to make myself good. Again the command is read, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" and again he promises to join the church, or do something else equivalent, while he continues to live in disobedience to Christ. Can he thus do anything to improve his own character and make himself acceptable to God? Alas! he only trifles with mercy, while he ceases not for one moment to distrust the Saviour, and to press on in his unbelief down to eternal death.

9. You cannot begin the work of your salvation by PRETENDING THAT YOU WISH TO BE SAVED, WHILE YOU RESIST THE GRACE AND GRIEVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Many pretend this, who, instead of setting their faces like a flint against the allurements of the world, and pressing on to cast themselves down in true humility at the feet of Christ,

continue to live only to the world and its pleasures. Exemption from the danger of future punishment is what they ardently desire; but they do not wish to procure this exemption by denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following the Saviour. All the salvation which they wish is, that God would let them alone, and not give them over to punishment. They have no anxiety to be free from sin, but only from the danger of hell; and if they could rid themselves of this danger, they would not care if they should be left to hate God forever.

All the efforts which the anxious inquirer makes for his own salvation, which come short of the duty commanded in the Gospel, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are vain and useless. Yet it is a common sentiment with such, that, of themselves, they must do some great thing to merit salvation, such as ascending to heaven, descending into the deep, or compassing the earth with works of charity and mercy, when all that God requires of them for acceptance is simply to believe in Christ. This faith includes everything which is indispensable to salvation; and without it, all else is vain.

But how can I possess myself of this saving faith? Evidently not by inaction, by waiting God's time, by depending on your good resolu-

tions, by trusting in the means of grace, by making a religious profession, by waiting for more feeling and more conviction, by indulging despairing thoughts of God's mercy, by attempting to make yourself better than you are through your own self-righteous efforts, nor by pretending that you wish to be saved while you resist the grace and grieve the Holy Spirit of God. The tendency of imagining that you can attain salvation by any of these methods, is to prevent your coming to Christ, and to lead you to build your hope of heaven on your own good works, instead of trusting for justification in him alone.

But the question returns: How can I believe? and how can a willingness to receive and rest on Christ by faith be produced in my soul? I answer that the truth, revealed in the Gospel, tends to waken faith in the torpid and slumbering soul. It is as natural for the truth, when applied by the Holy Spirit to the conscience and the heart, to produce a willingness in the sinner to receive and rest on Christ for his salvation, as it is for the sun to impart light and heat, or for amiability and beauty to awaken love. To acquaint yourself therefore with the facts of redemption, as set forth in the sacred oracles, is indispensable to your faith. This is the truth in view of which faith is inspired. You need to apprehend the character of God, his

kindness in giving his Son to die for sinners, and his readiness to pardon and save ; to apprehend the character and relations of Jesus Christ, his divinity, his incarnation, his work of atonement, and his boundless compassion for the lost ; to comprehend the facts of the Holy Spirit's agency in the conversion and sanctification of the soul ; and, in a word, to have the whole character of God displayed to your view in its matchless excellence, that you may feel a confidence to commit yourself into his hands. This view of truth you can gain only by a careful study of the Bible.

Faith is in itself so simple, that no explanation can make it more intelligible than it is when the term expressing it is understood. How, for example, could you teach a little child to confide in its parent ? It is the known character and relations of the parent, as developed in unnumbered acts of kindness toward the child, which excites its filial confidence ; so that, in view of danger, the child will instinctively rush into its parent's arms. It is that parental kindness and love which the child is conscious of experiencing from day to day, which inspires its faith. And this is the principle in accordance with which God operates on the hearts of men, to bring them to the acceptance of his mercy through Jesus Christ. The great facts of redemption, as revealed in the Gospel, naturally

tend to inspire the sinner with confidence in Christ, and to lead him to trust in him alone for salvation. Who can read of God's goodness displayed toward the world, in so loving it as to give his only Son to die for our redemption, and not feel that he is worthy of our entire confidence? Who can view Christ in his endurance of the cross and of its horrid agonies, to save us, and not feel that he is infinitely worthy to be trusted? No philosophical explanation of the nature of faith could do for us what these simple facts of the Gospel are fitted to achieve. Faith is the natural impulse of the mind excited in view of them.

There is no intermediate step between this view of truth and the production of faith; nor can any explanation be given on this point beyond the simple fact, that it is the tendency of the truth-revealed in the Gospel to inspire the mind of the anxious sinner with faith in the Redeemer. Its failure to do this is to be ascribed, not to the truth, but to the sinner who prevents the proper influence of that truth over him, by his own foolish choice of the world. Just at the point where he should yield to the impression of truth and cast himself by faith on the Saviour, he turns away, gives his thoughts to the world, and thwarts those precious influences designed for his salvation. Instead of yielding up his heart to Christ, he forsakes him,

as did those unbelieving Jews of whom our Saviour said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

It is the natural tendency of the Gospel to awaken in a sinner the conviction of sin, a sense of his utter ruin, to make him feel the justness of his condemnation, and to encourage him, by the kindness and love of God displayed on the cross, to trust in the Saviour. So that not faith only, but all the states of mind preceding and accompanying its exercise, are the natural result of truth, as it is made operative on the heart by the Holy Spirit. In every stage of that impression which leads the sinner to cast himself at the feet of Christ, the truth produces its natural results. No explanation can make this point plainer. If the inquirer should dwell on it in his thoughts for years, he would understand it no better than he now does.

The word is nigh you then, in your mouth and in your heart. You often think of your duty and speak of it; and now the great question is, why do you not obey it? "He that cometh to me," said Christ, "I will in no wise cast out." You feel your need of mercy; you feel that if God should leave you to perish in your sins, he would be just. You know enough of your guilt and danger to be sensible that without Christ for you

Saviour you must forever perish. View him, then, as he presents himself to you in his Word ; one who has voluntarily given himself up to death for sinners, and is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him. Is he not deserving of your confidence ? Can you not commit yourself into his hands, saying, Dear Redeemer, I come to thee in my extremity ; I come in all my guilt, for I know that "if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

CHAPTER IX.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH; OR CHRIST THE DOOR OPENING INTO THE PATH OF LIFE.

IF one charged with murder should be put on trial, and after a full and impartial investigation, it should be proved that he was far from the scene of death at the time it occurred, he would be acquitted, and justified in the view of the law, in consequence of his own innocence. To justify, is to prove or declare one innocent. As used by the sacred writers, the word justification describes the state of one who, though under condemnation as a sinner, is treated as innocent, for the sake of Christ in whom he believes. It is a gracious act on the part of God thus to treat the guilty, removing the curse of the law from them, and enabling them, as forgiven sinners, to enjoy eternal life as a free gift, purchased for them by Jesus Christ.

When one comes into this justified state, the sins of his past life are blotted out, as with a sponge, from the book of judgment. Instead of receiving punishment, he is treated as if he were righteous,

for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered for him. His faith is counted for righteousness; and believing in the Saviour, he enjoys the love of God as perfectly as if he had never sinned.

This plan of salvation, through the self-sacrifice of another, is peculiar and distinctive. It is the door of life opened by the Gospel to the world. It saves all who enter it. It provides both for the pardon, and for the acceptance as righteous, of the condemned; and these are necessary to salvation. No one who is a sinner can stand justified before God without the pardon of his sins; and the fact that pardon is indispensable to his enjoyment of divine favor, precludes the idea of justification by his own righteousness.

The apostle Paul shows that justification in the saints of old included the pardon of their sins. "Abraham believed God, and it," that is, his faith, "was counted for righteousness;" and David describes "the blessedness of the man whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered." Neither Abraham nor David was justified by his own good works. Both needed and obtained the pardon of their sins; and if those, in whose piety the Jews confided, received the pardon of their sins, so must all receive pardon who shall enter into the kingdom of God.

Acceptance is connected with pardon. This

acceptance is not for the sake of any good in the sinner himself, but of the righteousness provided for him. Christ stands before the eternal throne, as one able to communicate the benefit of his righteousness to all who believe in him. The merit of this salvation is all the Lord's; none of it belongs to the sinner, who is accepted only for what Christ has done and suffered for him. Receiving and resting by faith on this Saviour, the sinner is pardoned, and accepted as righteous, and, as the purchase of Christ's death, is justified for his sake alone.

Faith is the means of justification, not its ground; it connects the soul spiritually with Christ, and communicates to it the life which he possesses. As Christ is righteous, so does the soul of the believer share in the benefits of this righteousness. As Christ cannot come into condemnation, neither can the soul of the believer come into condemnation. As Christ is glorious and eternally blessed in the kingdom of his Father, so will the soul of the believer enjoy all these benefits, as the purchase of the Saviour's death.

This justification is exclusive of merit in the subject of it, and proceeds from the grace of God alone. Grace flows through all the provisions made for the restoration of fallen man. It is not by infusing righteousness into one, and constitut-

ing him just, that he is justified ; but by pardoning his sins, and accepting him as righteous for the sake of the righteousness of Christ. It is not for what one becomes through conversion, or for any gracious affections wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, that he is justified ; nor for the sake of any good works done by him ; nor is it for the merit of his faith. The consideration of what he is to become, as converted, does not enter into the ground of his justification ; but the consideration of Christ alone, as the atoning Saviour.

There are great errors prevalent on this subject. Some claim to possess, by nature, a spark of love to God, which only needs to be enlivened by prayers and good works, to become a flame of true piety in the soul ; others claim that if they do as well as they can, Christ will make up for their deficiencies, and they will be saved, partly for the merit of their obedience, and partly for what Christ will do for them ; and others, that their sincerity and honesty, considered as moral goodness in them, will save them. All these depart from the plan of the Gospel, and aim to justify themselves by their own good works, instead of depending on Christ.

Some, equally in error, believe that all sin is washed away by baptism ; that grace is by regeneration then implanted in the soul ; that this grace
d by prayers and good works, and that

this is the way and these are the means, through which the sinner is brought into a state of acceptance and favor with God ; thus substituting the church with its ordinances in the place of Christ. But these errors the Gospel discards, while it sets forth Christ as the only door opening into the path of life.

Justification by faith regards the whole of the apostate race as sinners under condemnation. It makes no distinction of persons, but represents all as equally condemned and lost without pardoning mercy. It teaches that no man is accepted because he is of superior goodness to another, but because he is one for whom Christ has died. The purest moralist cannot be saved for the sake of his morality, nor the convicted sinner for the merit of his prayers and tears. He has no merit of his own, nor can he create any merit in himself which may be the ground of his salvation ; but if he be saved, it must be only for the sake of Christ.

The sacrifice which this divine Redeemer has offered up is amply sufficient to atone for sin. The vilest, therefore, may be as readily accepted for the sake of Christ, as those esteemed good. Hence the thief on the cross, Mary Magdalene, and Paul, the persecutor of the Church, obtained forgiveness. And there are millions of our race, as vile and sinful as they, who have found mercy through a Saviour.

But no one is ever justified because he is better than another ; for the consideration of his personal goodness does not enter into the ground of his acceptance with God. Even those who think themselves good, when they come to investigate their characters, and compare them with the right standard, will feel that they are cut off from any hope of acceptance through their own merits. The proud Pharisee can enter heaven only through the forgiveness of his sins ; and the best men on earth, who are impenitent, must view their own imagined goodness as of no account, and receive at the feet of Christ a better righteousness than their own, or they cannot be saved.

It would be difficult to find a purer character, or one who acted more sincerely in his belief, than Paul, before his conversion. But when he came to view himself in the light of God's law, all his hopes of salvation based on his own goodness were slain, and he reposed his guilty soul on Christ alone. And yet, it is a common opinion, that one is saved because he is morally good ; and it is the common course of an awakened sinner to try to make himself good enough to be saved. He therefore resolves, and re-resolves, and prays and strives and hopes to grow better, and become so good that he will be accepted of God at last, all the time deluding himself with the im-

pression that this is the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel. But it is an entire mistake. He cannot make himself good enough to be accepted, even if he were to become as holy as an angel ; for that would not take away his past sins. What he needs is pardon, and this can be obtained only by humbling himself in true submission before God, and resting by faith on the Redeemer.

It is hard for the moral youth and the honorable man of business to get down on their knees before God like any other sinner, and there ask forgiveness for Christ's sake alone. And this is the reason why so many of this class are passed by of mercy. Their pride and self-esteem prevent them from taking the only steps by which they can gain divine acceptance. It is because they will not humble themselves before him in repentance, and receive and rest on Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour, that they fail of salvation, though they are convinced of its importance, and hope at some future time to secure it. They feel themselves to be good, much better in many respects than some who profess religion ; and setting up their own righteousness as the ground of their hope, they turn away from Christ.

Would that you would inquire into your true character as a sinner, humbly acknowledge it, and come to Jesus Christ and accept his offered

mercy ! Would that you would believe on him with all your heart, and by faith take hold of his hand, that he might guide you into the path of life !

How could the thief on the cross have been saved, other than by a plan of mercy like this ? He could make no atonement for his sins. All that he could do, was to accept the atonement made for him, and to cast himself by faith on Jesus, crying, " Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom." And how else could the penitent Mary have found pardon ? Not by her own works of righteousness, for she had none. It was through a simple trust in her Saviour, such as brought her spirit into one of love and obedience to him ; and he said unto her, " Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace."

If you would know by experience the power of this salvation, go to Christ, humble yourself before him in true penitence, and trust for justification in him alone. Say, in the language of the expressive hymn,

" Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands.
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling ;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace,
Foul, I to the fountain fly.
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

May you be enabled, by divine grace, to say, in sincerity, Precious Redeemer, I will walk in the strength of thy righteousness, even of thine only ; and when I have finished my course on earth, O receive me to thyself, that I may cast my crown before thee, and celebrate the riches of that grace which has plucked a guilty sinner from hell, and set his feet on the celestial Zion, the glorious mount of God's everlasting praise !

CHAPTER X.

CONVERSION.

THERE are various expressions descriptive of that spiritual change experienced by man in turning into the path of life, such as "born again," "new creature," "putting off the old and putting on the new man," all of which refer to true conversion. Our Saviour uses one of the boldest metaphors to illustrate this change of heart, when he says, "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Herein he affirms that the natural man must experience as great change in his spiritual nature, to become a Christian, as would be experienced in his physical nature, were he to be created over again, and born into a new world.

The reality and power of this spiritual change are fully attested by the Word of God, and by Christian experience. In what then does it consist? Our Saviour distinctly intimated that the new birth of which he spake, was of a spiritual nature, and such as fitted man to enter the kingdom of God. It is not a mere change in outward conduct, such as occurs in making a profession of

religion, or in the reception of gospel ordinances, but it is a renovation of the moral affections. Baptism is not this change, nor does it necessarily involve it. Though a symbol of the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration, yet the administration of water has no necessary connection with the spiritual cleansing of the heart, the external symbol, with the internal state. Nor is this spiritual change a change of the natural or constitutional powers of the mind; it involves the creation of no new faculties, but a new exercise of the affections, followed by a new and holy obedience.

In conversion, the heart is changed, so that it loves God supremely. Beyond this simple fact we need not carry our investigations. It adds nothing to our knowledge to be told that, in the new birth, a principle of holiness is implanted in the soul, which causes it to become the fountain of all holy affections, any more than in natural science, that water contains a transparent principle which causes it to be transparent, or light a brilliant principle which causes it to be brilliant. All that is of any value to be known on these subjects is, that water is transparent, and light brilliant; and that, in conversion, the rebellious heart of man is changed from enmity to love.

Conversion is not conviction of sin, though this precedes it; nor is it sanctification, though this

follows it; but it is the spiritual turning of the heart unto God, resulting in the establishment of new relations to him, and a new life. It occurs instantaneously; for there is no perceptible period when one is not either a condemned sinner, or else justified and saved.

The power to produce this spiritual change in the heart of depraved man, is divine. All converting influences come from the Holy Spirit. They proceed not from wicked spirits, nor from the world; nor do they proceed from tendencies in the unholy heart itself; but they come from God. He saw the world in moral ruin, and sent his Son to die for sinners, and his Holy Spirit to apply to them the cleansing and saving benefits of the propitiatory sacrifice. These converting influences all originate in his grace or mercy, and are imparted according to his wisdom. As the world of nature is under his control, so is the world of grace. How, in effecting his merciful purposes, the Holy Spirit operates to change the heart, we know not, further than that he makes use of the truth. We know the simple fact, that such divine influences are exerted on the heart, in conversion, as to dispose it to obey God.

There is no discrepancy in the various representations of the Bible on this subject, when these are properly understood. In one connection God says,

"A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;" and in another, he commands men, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit." It is here taught, that God gives converted sinners their new hearts; and that sinners, in conversion, make them themselves new hearts. But these sentiments, when properly explained, are not in conflict with each other.

1. God gives converted sinners their new hearts through the divine influences conferred on them for their conversion, all of which proceed from him. He devised the plan of salvation, provided a Saviour, appointed a day of grace, and made the proclamation of mercy in the Gospel; and he accompanies these provisions of grace with the converting influences of his Holy Spirit. In this sense, he is the author of all good, and the source of spiritual life in the soul of man. The new heart, and all its associate Christian graces, are his gift, and are conferred according to his good pleasure. As an omniscient being, he knew from eternity whom his grace would reach and save; these are called his elect; they receive their new hearts from him in accordance with his purposes of grace; and he confers on them their new hearts through the powerful operations of his Holy Spirit imparted for this purpose.

2. Converted sinners make themselves their new

hearts, by yielding themselves up to God under those influences which he exerts upon them for their conversion. There is no impropriety in the statement that God turns the sinner into the path of life, and that the sinner turns into this path ; for both these forms of expression are true. When it is said that God turns the sinner, it is meant that he uses the divine influences which produce this result ; and when it is said that the sinner turns, it is meant that, under the divine influences, he goes to God and gives him his heart, believing in Jesus.

This use of language is of daily occurrence in the common affairs of life. A wealthy proprietor may point to his mansion as having been built by him ; the contractor may do the same ; and the carpenters and masons may claim it as their work ; and all these claims may be proper in the sense in which they were designed to be understood. The proprietor furnished the means, and gave the plan to the contractor ; the contractor undertook the work ; and the carpenters and masons were the active builders. So we are spiritually God's workmanship. He converts the sinner, or turns him into the path of life, through his influences specially directed to this end ; and the sinner, under his influences, turns to him. The divine and human agencies are thus active and co-operative

in every instance of conversion. Not that there is any goodness in man, or that he is inclined to turn of himself, irrespective of the divine interposition ; for he has no more agency in the reception of this converting grace than has a beggar in putting forth his hand to receive alms.

God sends his Holy Spirit to effect this work, not because man, in the sense of having the natural powers and faculties which are requisite for this purpose, is not able to turn to God, but because he is so averse to God that he will not do it, but will inevitably perish without the divine interposition in his behalf. If man had not the natural endowments of a responsible being, it would be an act of justice in our Creator to confer them, before holding him responsible. But if, when amply endowed with these gifts, he will not use them aright, it becomes an act of grace in God to send his Holy Spirit to operate in his heart, and is something more than what justice requires. It is a mere gratuity on the part of God, not an act of justice, thus to confer his converting power.

The Holy Spirit thus renews the sinner's heart, not by conferring on him any new powers of intellect or reason, but by overcoming the tendencies of his depravity and elevating his affections to God. Under his divine operations, man acts as freely, intelligently, and with as much responsibil-

ity, as in any other conduct of life ; so that his turning unto the Lord is as really his own act as if no such influence had been exerted. While the Holy Spirit moves him to obey the Gospel, he chooses as freely the path of life as he once did its opposite. In the act of turning into this path, all the powers of his mind are as active as were those of our great progenitor when he put forth his hand and took the fruit of the forbidden tree. As the turning away from God through distrust of him, under the influence of the devil, was the sin by which man fell, so the turning of the heart to God through faith, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is the act by which man is reinstated in the enjoyment of the divine friendship. In this change of heart, the active powers of the mind are stimulated to the highest intensity, and are compared by our Saviour, in their exercises, to a struggle for the prize in a conflict of physical strength. "Strive," he says, "to enter in at the strait gate." Thus while God is working in man to will and to do, man works out his own salvation with fear and trembling. God is active in conferring his gracious gift, and the sinner, through the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, is active in receiving it ; but the merit of it belongs to God ; man is only the obliged recipient.

It is a practical question, how does conversion

occur, and how may one who is unconverted become possessed of a new heart? The scriptural teaching on this subject is, by believing in Jesus. Said Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" And when Jesus had rebuked his ignorance of the sacred Scriptures, he proceeded to tell him how this spiritual change is effected. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Thousands read this, without thinking of its relation to the question of the Counsellor. But can any response be more appropriate? It gives us the assurance, that whoever shall believe in Jesus shall, in the very act of believing, experience the moral change which has been described. Believing in Jesus, and the new birth, are simultaneous. No one thus believes who is not converted, and no one is converted who does not thus believe. Yet these effects are the results of the Holy Spirit's operations, and include, also, the active operation of the sinner's own mind. Believing in Christ is as distinct from this moral change, as looking on the brazen serpent was from the healthful change which accompanied it. You need never trouble yourself to inquire whether one is regenerated before he believes, or believes before he is regenerated; since it is WHEN he believes that he is regenerated, is changed in all his

moral affections, and becomes a new creature in Christ. In the very act of looking to the Saviour by faith, the heart is changed.

The way to come into possession of a new heart, then, is to look by faith to Jesus. This the Gospel proclaims as the specific duty of every man, and as the only means of his conversion. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, or, the true and living way. He is the way to be born again, the way to true repentance, the way to holy obedience, the way into the path of life and to heaven ; and you must enter this path through Christ alone, or you must fail to tread it. When those in the camp of Israel who had been bitten by fiery serpents looked upon the brazen one which Moses had set up, a healthful change passed over them ; so, under the Gospel, when sinners come by faith to Jesus Christ, a spiritual change passes over them ; their hearts are renewed after the image of God, they become "new creatures" in Christ Jesus, and they enter, through Christ, the door into the path of life. To know this spiritual change by your experience, look by faith to the Saviour. Behold "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world !" Believe on him ; and in the very act of casting yourself, by faith, into his arms, you shall feel the transforming power of his love. Old things will pass away, and all things will become new

CHAPTER XI.

SAVING GRACE ILLUSTRATED.

WHEN Naaman, the General of the Syrian army came to Elisha to be healed of his leprosy, he was told by the man of God through his servant to go and wash in Jordan seven times, as sinners under the Gospel are commanded to believe on Jesus Christ, and they shall be saved. The proud general had supposed that Elisha would pay him great deference, would come out to him and stand and call upon his God, and smite his hand over the leprosy and cure it; and he expected to pay him well for his services. But when he found that Elisha did not come out to him, but sent a servant to tell him to go wash in the river Jordan, he was enraged, and would have departed to his own land, had not his servants persuaded him to a different course. There is a striking analogy between the pitiable condition of this leper, the means of cure, and the effects which a knowledge of these means produced on him, and the state of sinners under the Gospel.

I. As in the case of Naaman, so in that of sin-

ners saved through Jesus Christ, God designs to EXALT HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE TO THE ABASEMENT OF HUMAN PRIDE. The prophet knew the effect which his course toward the leper would have on a haughty mind. Neither in his deportment toward Naaman, nor in the means of his cure, was there any deference paid to the station or dignity of the proud general. A beggar could as easily wash himself in Jordan as could Naaman. It was evident, therefore, that it was not on account of his honorable position, his valor, or his wealth, that he received mercy, but that it was of grace alone; and this consideration was eminently fitted to humble him, and waken in him a suitable acknowledgment of the divine mercy. So is the plan of redemption in the Gospel such as to dispense with all human merit as the ground of the divine acceptance, and to lead the sinner to ascribe the glory of this work to the grace of God alone.

1. The first effect which the Gospel produces on men, as the means of exalting the divine grace, is to make them sensible of THEIR RUINED AND HELPLESS CONDITION AS SINNERS. Naaman was indignant when told to go and bathe in the river Jordan; but when his servants expostulated with him, and he began to reflect, he knew that he must die a miserable and loathsome leper, unless he availed himself of this means of cure. He

knew that there was no other available resource; and he was made to feel, as a leper, his own helplessness and dependence. When, therefore, he turned his chariot toward the Jordan, and proceeded thither, every step that way tended to deepen these impressions. So the command of the Gospel, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," tends to awaken in the unconverted a consciousness of their moral ruin. Saved by their own good works they cannot be. And the reason is, that they are already condemned as sinners, and are wholly dependent for the remission of their sins on the great atoning sacrifice. No human aid can reinstate them in the divine favor. None but Jesus can cleanse away their sins.

As Naaman was led to feel that his best efforts to heal his own malady were impotent, so are sinners under the Gospel taught their moral impotence. The fact that they are commanded to believe in Jesus for salvation, proclaims their self-directed efforts to be of no avail. To wash in Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, would not heal the leper, but to wash in Jordan would; so there are no means of human devising which can ever take the place of those which God has appointed; and the impression which this fact is fitted to produce on the sinner is, to awaken in him

a consciousness of his own moral helplessness and ruin.

2. Another effect of the Gospel is to bring those whom it influences into a HUMBLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE DIVINE GOODNESS, AND LEAD THEM TO ASCRIBE THEIR SALVATION TO GRACE ALONE. Naaman was led to perceive that his virtues, or the dignity to which he was raised, did not constitute any part of the ground on which healing mercy was bestowed. So are sinners, saved through Christ, led to view the divine grace alone as their only hope. When Naaman had come up the seventh time from the Jordan, and his flesh had begun to come again as the flesh of a little child, he could not have felt that he had done anything to merit healing mercy nor to purchase it, but was compelled to acknowledge the power of Israel's God, whose benefits were conferred without money and without price; and it kindled in him a desire to make some suitable return to the prophet, as a manifestation of gratitude for the part he had performed in this work. And this is the effect which the Gospel plan of mercy, through a Saviour, is designed to produce on the heart of the converted sinner. It is fitted to make him feel that it is not for any merit in himself, but of grace alone, that he is saved; and it prompts in him a desire to manifest his gratitude to God for the mercy shown

to him, by a life of unfeigned obedience. Thus it is that we are won over to God, to hate our past sins, and to yield ourselves up to him forever. These are the proper effects of the Gospel, and are designed by God. He thus humbled the pride of Naaman, and he abases all pride, that he may recover his sway over the affections of ruined man, and recover him from his lost condition, into the path of life.

II. As in the case of Naaman, so in that of sinners, it is true that the STATE OF HEART REQUIRED in them for the experience of mercy, is the REAL GROUND OF THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE MEANS PROPOSED, and of their neglect of them. As the prophet's directions to Naaman were different from what he expected, so are the directions of the Gospel different from the preconceived plans of human wisdom, and are fitted to bring mankind into a humbling sense of their dependence on the divine grace. The Gospel thus abases human wisdom, and with it man. It counteracts his emotions of natural pride, and teaches him that, if he be ever saved, God is to direct the method of mercy. "I thought," said Naaman, "that he would surely come over to me, and stand and call on the name of his God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper." Poor man! He had come to receive at the hands of God the

greatest blessing, and yet was not willing to accept it through the means appointed ; but wished to dictate the method of bestowal, and perhaps to take credit to himself for having given a right direction to omnipotent power. God would permit no such interference with his wisdom, and this filled Naaman with rage. So when convicted sinners feel their need of mercy, they often try to plan a different method of cure from that divinely appointed. They wish to do what they think best to secure the blessing, while they neglect to obey the plain command of God. And often, when they have resolved, read, prayed, and wept, have sought salvation in dependence on their own good works, and found it not, because they have not done that which God required of them, they are indignant. Then their enmity rises toward God, and they turn away from the Gospel with unfeigned scorn.

The plan of grace through Jesus Christ, opposes the natural current of inclination in the unconverted, and is eminently fitted to humble their pride ; and this is a source of the inveterate dislike which they sometimes feel toward it. No one loves to feel the consciousness of his own guilt. But the Gospel plan of salvation brings the sinner to the point where he must confess and forsake his sins, if he be ever saved ; and it is hard for one who

has ever indulged a persuasion of his own moral goodness, to be required to view himself in the mirror of God's perfect law, and on his knees to tell God what a guilty creature he is, how he has lived in the rejection of his mercy, and how unworthy he is of the divine notice or compassion. How can the moral youth, the honorable merchant, the respected lawyer, the skilful artificer, the dignified statesman, the man who has hitherto gloried in his wisdom and risen high in the estimation of others, take the place of a rebel at the footstool of grace, and humbly sue for mercy there? O, it is hard, because pride opposes it; and the requirement of repentance, as indispensable to forgiveness, tends to rouse the bitter enmity of the heart against the simple method of salvation proposed in the gospel!

God, in the system of his grace, dispenses with all human merit, and makes faith in Christ the only ground of justification. But no man likes to feel indebted to another person; and it is hard for a proud heart to come down into the dust and accept as an unmerited favor the gift purchased through the sufferings of Christ. Often does it turn away in scorn from this method of mercy. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" is the language of its pride; "May I not wash in them and

be clean?" May I not do something acceptable to God, and thus provide my own atonement? is the sinner's feeling. Must I be indebted to Christ alone? May I not myself do some great thing which will deserve salvation, and enrol my name in the book of life? No, poor sinner, you cannot. If you are ever saved, it must be by renouncing such vain efforts and reposing your burdened soul on Christ. Is it hard for you to do this? It is so only because it is so easy, and leaves you so little to do in the work of your salvation. And pride would not have it thus.

The plan of the Gospel requires the heart to be surrendered to God, and the subordination of its desires to his most holy will. This too is a reasonable duty and an easy one, to those who feel right. But the convicted sinner is not pleased with it. Must he give up his sinful pleasures, subdue his lusts, and henceforth have no will but God's? He feels that it is a "hard saying;" and in the full consciousness of the consequences, he often turns away in anger from the duty set before him in the Gospel.

Do you wish to be saved? Behold then God's plan of mercy through faith in a crucified Saviour! From this plan do not turn away. Never can you enter into the path of life, but through Christ, the door. You must bring your pride, your worldli-

ness, your sins, and your resistance of God, and lay them all down at the threshold, there parting forever with everything which conflicts with supreme devotion to the Redeemer. Think of Naaman as he descended into the Jordan. Could that stream of simple water which flowed so beautifully along cleanse away his leprosy? It did. He obeyed the word of life, and came up from the bank of that river a new man. No sooner did he submit to the means of cure which God had ordained, than "his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child." So must you submit to the plan of mercy revealed in the Gospel, and come to God through Jesus Christ. You must cast yourself before him, in the confession of your sins, and accept his pardoning mercy as a free gift. You must come as a beggar, having nothing in your hand to purchase this mercy, nothing to plead, and feeling that you are dependent on sovereign grace alone. You must be willing to feel indebted for your salvation wholly to grace, so that your future life may be one of grateful devotion to God for his unspeakable benefits.

CHAPTER XII.

MOTIVES TO IMMEDIATE RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.

It is your duty and privilege to be a Christian. It is a privilege conferred on you, as one of the lost race for whom a Saviour has been provided, and to whom the Gospel, with its blessed invitations, is sent. I come to entreat you by a consciousness of the wrong done to God by your delay to return unto him, and a regard for your own immortal happiness, now to yield your heart up to God, through faith in the Redeemer. If you are ever saved, there must come a period when you will deliberately resolve to press into the path of life, and will proceed at once to carry out this resolution in practice. Your sinful heart must submit itself to God, or you cannot see his face in peace. And now he makes an appeal to you, whether you will not seize the present opportunity to settle the great question of your immortal welfare without further delay.

Are you not fully convinced of your own sinfulness in having loved the world and its pleasures more than God? Are you not satisfied that your thoughts and desires are far from that moral

purity and holiness which God approves? Are you not conscious of having made repeated efforts to shake off conviction, and banish the thoughts of a judgment to come? Have you not often consented to procrastinate the subject of personal religion, although it has been urged upon your attention in the most affecting manner? Do not innumerable sins oppress you, and does not conscience sometimes whisper in your inmost soul, This guilty sinner is going to meet his final judge, laden with unrepented iniquities, and without an interest in the cleansing blood of Christ, to take away his sins?

Are you not conscious of the futility of your past endeavors, and the vanity of your future hopes? Are you not conscious that your only safety consists in the immediate consecration of yourself to him who died for you; and are you not aware that if you now procrastinate your duty, the time may come unexpectedly, when it will be too late to find the mercy which you need? You may think that it will be easy to recover your serious impressions, if they are now banished; but you deceive yourself on this point. Have you never read the language of God where he says, "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Once deliberately banish your serious impressions, and grieve away the Holy Spirit, and what assurance have you that they will ever return? Does the constant indulgence of worldly passions, till they have strengthened themselves into habits, render them easier to be abandoned? Is the heart more readily cured of its love for the world, by yielding itself up to the supreme control of worldly affections? If you drive away the serious impressions which now prompt you to flee for salvation to Christ, or disregard them, do you not deliberately cut yourself off from hope? Choosing the world as your portion, and adhering to your cherished sins, do you not grieve away the Holy Spirit, and forever put yourself beyond the reach of his influences?

A man of middle age, and an habitual attendant in the sanctuary, became deeply convinced of his sinfulness. He was ever present at religious meetings, and seemed earnestly to desire and seek the salvation of his soul, but found no comfort. Solicitous for his spiritual welfare, I took him by the arm on one occasion after the evening services had closed, and walked with him homeward, at the same time pressing upon his attention the necessity of his being willing to give up all for Christ, if he would obtain mercy. When we had reached a certain angle of the road, where we

were to separate, he turned, and with great solemnity, looking me full in the face, said, "Sir, there are sins of my life which are dear to me as the apple of my eye, and I cannot part with them." The clear moon was shining over us, and it seemed to me in reflecting on that incident, as if it were the eye of God looking down upon us to take notice of this deliberate act, and as if the pen of the recording angel then wrote, as the final decision in his case, "My Spirit shall no longer strive with him;" for, from that period, all serious impressions wore away, and I never afterward knew that he was again awakened.

And does not the delay of conversion in your case result from your active preference of the world to God? May there not be some darling sin cherished, which you are unwilling to part with, and the love of which it is the design of the Holy Spirit to slay? Do not then grieve away this heavenly friend, who seeks your good. Certain it is, that without his divine aid, you will never renounce the world for Christ. We have no more expectation of your conversion unless the Holy Spirit accompany the truth to your heart, than we have of persuading the slumbering dead to rise. So decided is the natural alienation of your heart from God, that we have no other dependence but on his almighty interposition in your

behalf. Will you grieve him then away, by treating him with marked indifference and neglecting his kind offices? O, who can succor you, if you renounce the help of God? If you now decline the path of your duty when you know where it lies, and yield not to the invitations of the Gospel, you may presently reach a position where Jehovah himself cannot consistently with his own purposes, character and truth, interpose in your behalf. When you shall have hardened yourself against the mercy of God, can you reasonably expect any other fate than that he should abandon you as he did Ephraim, of whom he said, "He is joined to his idols, let him alone."

But now, the door into the path of life is open, the Saviour invites you to enter, the Holy Spirit is ready to guide you and save you through his regenerating power; you have now the opportunity, which may soon be gone. Do not, then, withhold your heart from Christ. Are you afraid to go to him, because you are conscious of your numerous sins, and fearful that Christ will not accept you? You need not indulge such unbelieving fears. You may confide in him with your whole heart, love him with the most ardent affection, and cast yourself by faith upon his mercy. You need never fear that Christ will be offended at your presumption, for it was to save sinners

that he came into the world. And though you were the most wicked wretch that ever lived, though you had incurred a dreadful load of guilt, yet it would still be the testimony of his Word that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Believe in him, yield up to him your heart, and you shall experience the power of his love. And when, as the true expression of your feelings, you can use the language of that affecting hymn,

"Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer,
Welcome to this heart of mine,
Lord, I make a full surrender,
Every power and thought be thine,
Thine entirely,
Through eternal ages thine,"

you will feel that Christ is yours, and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God, over a sinner that repenteth.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIFFICULTIES REMOVED.

OFTEN, at the very point of yielding his heart to God, temptations arise to lead off the inquiring sinner's thoughts from his duty. One of the most common devices of the tempter is, to persuade him THAT HE DOES NOT YET FEEL ENOUGH TO COME TO CHRIST. He is conscious of his guilt, and need of mercy, but has not that peculiar intensity of conviction which he supposes to be necessary to conversion.

This arises from a misconception of the way to Christ. It is exceedingly difficult to expel the thought from the inquiring mind, that salvation depends on the depth and intensity of convictions; whereas it is the nature of the conviction, not its depth, which shows the presence or absence of a genuine work of grace. If God should display to one impenitent the imminence of his spiritual danger, and open to his mind the world of despair, with all its terrors, it would kindle in his bosom emotions of dreadful fear. But it would not convert him. No one was ever converted merely through fear of hell. It is the love of

Christ, as seen on the cross, which is the great means of subduing the heart to penitence. No rebel was ever won to God through an exhibition of his terrible and punitive power; but the rebel is won through the influences of the cross. The one may indeed rouse the mind to anxious consideration, but it is the other which attracts its love and confidence. "The goodness of God leadeth you to repentance."

All the terrors of the law which could concentrate themselves on the mind, could produce none but a forced submission; nor is there any spiritual virtue in the experience of such terrors. They render no one better prepared to come to Christ than if they had not been felt. They are not of the nature of true conviction, which is a feeling of the wrong and injury done by sin against a holy and just God; and he who is conscious of this wrong, has all the conviction and feeling he needs to enable him to come to Christ in true repentance. Never will Jesus refuse to accept a soul which is willing to confide in him as a Saviour; nor should any feeling of distrust on this account prevent one for a moment from yielding up to him his heart. Even if the horror felt on account of sin were as powerful and enduring as is that of the lost in the world of despair, it would do nothing toward accelerating his faith in Christ, or to make the terror-stricken heart acceptable to him.

Another difficulty sometimes suggested is *that one cannot come to Christ of himself*. The convicted sinner having done, as he thinks, all that he can to secure his own conversion, settles down in the persuasion that the Holy Spirit must do the rest. He thus solaces himself with the thought that he is waiting at the Gospel pool, and ready to be healed whenever God shall send his angel and trouble the water. All this is very absurd and dangerous. He has reached a point where he should yield his heart to God ; but instead of going over to him in true submission, he expects God to come over to him and treat him as a pardoned child before he penitently submits to Him. But how absurd would it have been for an Israelite bitten by a fiery serpent, when commanded to look upon the brazen serpent set up by Moses, to answer, "I am waiting God's time;" or to have said, "If it is determined that I shall be saved I shall be, and if not, I cannot help it;" or to have replied, "I cannot come of myself." That God had commanded the Israelites to look and live, was a sufficient guaranty that if they would but comply with the directions which had been given, they would experience healing mercy. So in respect to the commands of the Gospel. Sinners, if they will but go forward in obedience to God, have a right to expect all that gracious assistance

which they need to enable them to do what he commands them. That they cannot go to Christ of themselves, is therefore a frivolous excuse; for they cannot do anything of themselves, but are wholly dependent on God for power to will and to do in respect to all their daily avocations. And it is a well established principle of the divine government, that in all the commands of the sacred Scriptures involving our duty, there is implied a guaranty of that gracious aid from him which we need to enable us to obey those commands. So that the sinner is wholly without excuse, if he decline obedience, or fail to be tremblingly solicitous for his own salvation, while God is working in him to will and do of his good pleasure. "Submit yourselves therefore to God." "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you."

Another difficulty respects the divine purposes. I MAY NOT BE ELECTED TO SALVATION, it is said, and how then can I come to Christ? A careful examination of this point will show that for all who come to the Saviour there is room. God is consistent with himself, and he cannot have a secret purpose which conflicts with those which are revealed. What then has he revealed as the great principle of his action on this subject? Is it not, that he will save all who come to him through Jesus Christ? Why then should one set up the

electing love of God as a bugbear, when it is plain that he who comes to Christ, believing in him, may know this love by his own experience? The difficulty is not in the divine purposes, but in the perverted views taken of them; and these perversions you must renounce in humble obedience to Christ, or you cannot be saved.

Another difficulty arises from an anxious desire of the sinner to KNOW THAT HE IS ACCEPTED of God, before he has given him his heart. This is a common error. Having reached a certain point of conviction, the sinner is often disposed to wait for the experience of religion before yielding himself up to God. But this is a great mistake; for it is impossible for one to know what religion is before he experiences it, or to feel the joys of pardon before he is forgiven. There were two sisters who for a long time attended religious meetings for the special benefit of the inquiring, and who, in many respects, gave encouragement to hope that they would soon be numbered among those who had found the Saviour. But their conviction of sin was not as genuine as is desirable, and they soon appeared to have reached a stationary point and made no further advances. They never, so far as I know, came to the Saviour, though I used every means in my power to make them relinquish a trust in their own righteousness and to lead them

to Him. In reflecting on their case, it has seemed to me, as if they felt that it was due to them, as they had so long sought religion, that God should give them some evidence of their divine acceptance, though they had not yet yielded up their hearts to him; that they wished to know that they had faith before they believed, and to experience the comfort of religion before they came into the possession of it; and that they wished God to come over to them with the blessings of his grace, instead of going over to him in true repentance. There they stood, resisting the truth, grieving the Holy Spirit, and destitute of the blessing. It will not do, thus to wait in impenitence for the manifestations of the divine mercy; but you must go to God in all your guilt, repenting of it, and cast yourself at his feet, confessing your sins, and believing with all your heart on the Saviour.

I AM AFRAID THAT CHRIST WILL NOT RECEIVE ME, expresses another difficulty frequently met with in the unconverted. So conscious of his own unworthiness is he, as to feel a distrust of Christ's willingness and power to save. But why should he thus distrust Christ? Is it not evidently an impeachment of his divine character to do it when he has given such clear manifestations of his readiness to save unto the uttermost all who come

unto God by him? Can he be pleased with this want of confidence in him? Far from it. He is most honored in being treated as one who is willing and able to save the vilest of men.

What ground is there for indulging the pretence that Christ is not able and willing to save? Does this thought disturb you? It is the offspring of unbelief—the very sin for which you are condemned. It is because you will not confide in the integrity of his word, that you delay to come to him. Banish, then, all such guilty fears; come just as you are, oppressed and burdened with your sins; and make a cheerful surrender to him of your whole heart. But there are often difficulties in the way of which the sinner is not himself aware, arising from *the unbending attachment of the heart to some unholy object*. The love of some sinful indulgence which he is unwilling to abandon for Christ, is a real obstacle to conversion; other difficulties are sometimes urged which are merely an excuse. Never can the convicted sinner come by faith to the Saviour unless willing to give up all for him, and to trust for justification in his righteousness.

There was one whom I well knew, a man of fair exterior and of middle age in life, whose mind became deeply impressed with a conviction of his own sinfulness. He constantly attended religious

meetings, and seemed earnestly to desire an interest in Christ, though he never expressed a hope that he had obtained it. There was something marked, and mysterious in his case. He seemed, for a long time, to linger at the door of mercy, but never entered in. Time presently wore off his religious impressions, and disclosed the obstacle to his conversion. It appeared, that while religiously impressed, he continued secretly to indulge in the use of intoxicating drink. It had been suspected by no one, yet the fact became known through his illness. I visited him often, but could do him no good. His mind was in ruins, but yet religiously affected. He would go from room to room in his delirium, peering into every corner, and when confined to his bed, would lift the several pieces of his bed-covering, and when asked what he wanted, replied, "I am looking for mercy." Thus he continued to do till his death.

This is but a solitary instance. There are many others of like character. It frequently happens, that when the Spirit of God is striving with the sinner, some darling lust which he is unwilling to sacrifice for Christ, becomes the fatal obstacle to his conversion. The same evil consequences result from a determined adherence to some business of a lucrative but sinful nature, or

to the gains of sin. I knew a person, who was engaged in the traffi; in ardent spirits, who, when convinced of his sinfulness, was constantly harrassed by the thought that if he should be converted, he would be obliged to give up his business. He struggled for a long time with his convictions, till he felt assured that if he did not part with all for Christ, he would certainly be lost; and then despairing of relief from any other source, he gave up the point which he had striven to retain, made a full surrender of his heart to the Saviour, and found mercy. Another individual, possessed of great wealth, whose property was chiefly rented for vile purposes, was convinced of his sinfulness, and could find no comfort till he came to the determination to lay himself and all that he had at the feet of Christ.

One of the greatest difficulties experienced by some, is to break away from their impenitent companions and friends, in order to cast themselves at the feet of Christ. Sometimes the worldly associations which have been formed prove an insurmountable obstacle to conversion. One is so connected in life, or so associated with the impenitent in their plans and pleasures, as to check all his aspirations to become a Christian. Often, these companions and friends, exert their influence to divert one that is inquiring for religion, and do all

they can to prevent the truth from affecting him. Very lamentable are the results of such endeavors. Many have been prevented in this way from obeying the Gospel. Perhaps the inquirer at a critical period of his experience is ashamed of Christ. Perhaps he is deterred by a false shame from taking the only step which can insure his salvation. He trembles at the thought of meeting his worldly companions, fears to take up his cross and follow Christ, and the opportunity is lost. Are you conscious of having come under any such influence? Do not yield to it. If you are fearful of offending your worldly friends by avowing Christ, or if you are ashamed of Jesus, you cannot enter into life. "For he that loveth father or mother more than me," said Christ, "is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, cannot be my disciple."

Instances are not rare where he who had been deterred from Christ through fear of being obliged to undertake the performance of some duty, such as that of leading the devotions of his family, has found, in the very act of attempting that duty, the mercy which he had previously sought in vain. It is indispensable, if you would come by faith to Christ, not only to break off every sin, but engage in the performance of every known duty. You must be willing to give up all at the feet of Christ,

for him, and to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow him, or you cannot be his disciple. At his feet only, can the obstacle arising from a love of sinful indulgence and a fear of undertaking the duty he requires be removed. It is there, that the love of the world is brought into conflict with the claims of Jesus; and the struggle of this conflict is often insupportable. This is the strait and narrow gate, and there is no other way but through this gate, to enter the path of life. You must cheerfully give up all for Christ, or he will give you up. Do not then hesitate, but consecrate yourself at once to this Saviour who has given his life's blood for the redemption of the lost. Let it be the language of your affectionate confidence, "None but Christ," "None but Christ," "Here blessed Jesus is my heart, take it; take all I have; I give myself away to thee forever more."

CHAPTER XIV.

DELAY INADMISSIBLE.

WHEN the sacred Scriptures teach that "now is the accepted time," they point to the present moment as the most favorable opportunity to settle the great question of return to God, by an immediate surrender of the heart to him. The declaration refers to the allotted period of grace which each individual has under the Gospel ; or the application may be still more specific, as when, during this allotted period, there is a combination of circumstances conducing to the awakening and conversion of the soul, and which gives intensity to the opportunity expressed by the word "now." If you were condemned to death, and the day of your execution fixed, it would be highly appropriate for the minister of Christ, in addressing you, to say that now is the accepted time ; and this is the very thought designed to be expressed in the Word of God. There is not an individual who knows with certainty that his heart will beat a minute longer ; all that he can know, without a revelation, is, that it is beating now, and that now he has the opportunity to come to Christ and be saved through faith in his name.

Suppose that you were upon the broad ocean in a tight and safe ship, and felt that there was no danger ; yet how long might it be before the ship, by the accidents of the sea, might become leaky and sinking ? A single tremendous wave striking it athwart, might instantly imperil the lives of all on board. Or a storm arising might force the mariner to put his craft before the wind, and to press on with all the sail he could carry, to weather some point of land, beyond which are sea-room and safety. Suppose that the effort fail, and that the ship, driven by the gale upon a rock-bound shore, is dashed upon the breakers. Suppose that while all on board are crowded upon deck, or into the shrouds, and are lashing themselves to the mast for safety, help should offer itself from the rocky cliff above, and friends should appear with the means to cast a rope to the ship, by which to draw a hawser to the shore, and thus provide safe egress for the endangered crew. And now the rope is cast, but not a hand is stretched to seize it. There is a lull and a favorable opportunity, and again the rope is cast, while from the shore the cry is heard, "Now lay hold of the rope or you are lost." But not a hand is stretched, for one says to another : There is no need of alarm ; the ship is still sound ; there is time enough yet. The effort from the shore is renewed ; the warning

voice is heard, that the storm is only lulled, and will soon return with redoubled violence ; yet they will not heed it, till presently it comes, the sea rolls in upon them with tremendous waves, and, amid the crashing timbers of the ship, all find a watery grave.

What infatuation ! you exclaim. It is so. But is it not that very infatuation under which you are acting, who will not seize the precious opportunity within your reach to save your soul ? No one can anticipate his fate by the appearances which now surround him. The sun will rise as clear and beautiful on the day of your death as it ever does ; the flowers will bloom as sweetly, the birds will sing as merrily, and nature will wear as gay an aspect as if you were not dying to be lost. Suppose that you should lie down this night confident that you should see the light of the morning sun ; and that during the hours of slumber the monarch of the grave should approach your bed and take your life away, and that you should awake in the world of spirits, and before God your Judge, and be inquired of by him, why you have not availed yourself of the mercy offered in the Gospel ? What would you say ? You could not plead that you had not had a sufficient opportunity, or that you did not know your peril. There was a young lady whose mind had been re-

peatedly awakened to the consideration of religion, but who had procrastinated the duty of return to God to a more favorable opportunity. She was taken ill; and being a near neighbor, I called, in the evening, to see her. Though in considerable pain, yet she felt herself in no danger; and when I addressed a few words to her respecting her relations to God, she said, "Will you please call in the morning; I hope that I shall then be better prepared to give attention to what you say?" The next day, the sun was just rising clear and beautiful, the flowers diffused a rich perfume, the birds were singing merrily, and I had early walked forth to enjoy the pleasant morning, when I learned that she was dead. Never shall I forget the shock occasioned by that intelligence, or the sad impressions of that moment. She had died thoughtless of her danger; and instead of meeting with her pastor, to learn the way of life from his lips, she had gone to meet the Saviour whom she had rejected. And are you not standing on the brink of this eternal ruin, and exposed to fall by death into the grave of the hopeless and the lost, through your delay to come to the Saviour? What prevents this doom? Whose arm upholds you? Is it not the kind arm of Jesus, who waits to be gracious, and is even now bidding you come to him?

Suppose that when you have read this chapter and laid down the book, you should never take it up again, and are summoned to the gloomy prison of the lost, what think you would you read upon those walls? Not oaths and blasphemies, but some of the sweetest texts of holy writ you ever read or listened to. You would read upon one tablet, in letters of burning fire, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" on another, "Wherefore he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him;" and on another, "He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." These tablets represent memory. You would remember and never forget their precious truths.

On every side you would read the suggestive words "Now is the accepted time;" and while you should read, your thoughts would trouble you, sighs would agitate your breast, while the language of self-reproach and sorrow would burst from your lips: O that I had acted under the impressions I once felt, and gone to Jesus without delay. I fully purposed then to go, but the moment fled. I neglected the opportunity, and here I am. Who can restore to me my forfeited blessings? How can I endure the thought that all is lost, through my own folly, and that there is

nothing in anticipation before me but endless exclusion from the happiness of the blessed? O for a drop of water to cool my tongue, "for I am tormented in this flame!" O eternity! eternity! how can I endure the sorrows embosomed in thine endless round of years.

But you have not yet come into these trying circumstances. You yet live, and merciful are the invitations given to you from the eternal throne. You are in the full enjoyment of blessings which may be gone in a moment; and yet you delay to come to Christ. If you had any good reason for this delay for a day, or an hour even, you might be justified in neglecting altogether your gracious opportunity; but the testimony of the Gospel is, that such delay is inadmissible, and that he who delays assumes the responsibility of continuing to live an enemy to God, and of dying under his curse. I remember once proposing the inquiry to a young man, under deep conviction, Do you now determine to choose God as your portion, and to seek him until you shall find him? His reply was, I do not know that I am willing to assume that responsibility. But you forget, said I, the responsibility which you are willing to assume,—that of disowning God still longer, and by your disobedience proclaiming him unworthy to reign over you. You forget that you assume

the responsibility of still longer rejecting Christ, and of grieving the Holy Spirit. You forget that you assume the responsibility of longer risking your everlasting happiness, by your unwillingness to do what is right. And which of these responsibilities are you willing to assume? Which is most worthy of you as a man, and which most honorable to your Maker, to determine to choose him as your portion and give him your heart, or to determine now to turn away from him? He seemed bowed in thought and in prayer; and, before the hour had passed away, found that peace which springs from true submission.

This presents to view the point at issue between your duty and conscience. God says, My son, my daughter, give me thine heart. And what is your responsibility in the case? It is that of deciding the great question, whether you will yield your heart to him or not. While you know the truth, while the Holy Spirit is striving with you, while you have the opportunity, the great point for you to settle is, whether you will come as you are to the Saviour, and trust in him alone for justification, giving him up your heart, or whether you will assume the responsibility of delay?

If you put aside the claims of God now, you may put them forever, by this neglect, beyond your reach. Do not risk these tremendous con-

sequences. Do not suffer the present moment to pass away without turning with your whole heart unto God. Think how many prayers have been offered in your behalf. Have you a pious father or mother, on earth or in heaven? Have you a pious brother, sister, or friend, anxious for your salvation? Do not discourage their hearts by your delay. Do not injure and grieve God. Think of his kindness. Think of the motives and influences to persuade you to come to Christ now, and of the responsibility which you will assume by delay. Arise and go to your Father. Yield not your eyes to slumber till you have first yielded your heart to God.

CHAPTER XV.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

FAITH in Jesus Christ is, in the Gospel, associated with repentance, and is there set forth as essential to salvation. Faith, in its general acceptance, is the assent of the mind to whatever is affirmed as true; but faith in Jesus Christ is peculiar and distinctive. It is more than a mere acknowledgement of the divine character of the Saviour, that he is the Son of God, that he became incarnate, died, rose again, ascended to heaven, and ever liveth to make intercession; for all this may be credited as true, and yet the heart not trust in him. It is more than to believe in the virtue of his atoning sacrifice, in his ability and willingness to save all who come unto him, and that if we trust in him he will save us. Faith in Jesus Christ consists in our receiving and resting upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the Gospel. It implies not only a conviction that he is able to save us, if we come to him, but an actual coming to him, and yielding up to him our heart.

No one will do this who does not feel conscious

of his spiritual infirmities. A physician may have a good reputation for skill ; but no one who is not sensible of some infirmity, will apply to him. Neither will one come to Christ, unless sensible of his ruined condition as a sinner ; for " the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Faith in Christ, therefore, implies in the subject of it a consciousness of his own spiritual need. When he believes in the Saviour, he does it under the full conviction of his moral ruin, and his need of just such a Saviour as the Gospel offers him.

So also does faith imply in the subject of it a conviction of his own helplessness ; and that he cannot, by any good resolutions, promises, or prayers, or by any other means of his own devising, remove the malady by which he is oppressed. No one will seek aid from a physician if he feel that he can heal himself. Nor will the convicted sinner apply to Christ, and trust in him alone for salvation, unless he be sensible that his sins have destroyed him, and that there is no hope for him but through the great atoning sacrifice.

Faith also includes the resting of the guilty soul on Christ, as on one able to satisfy the demands of the law in its stead, and release it from condemnation. It is a spiritual act of confidence, expressed by casting one's self into his arms for refuge, as a

little child, in the view of danger, rushes into the arms of a kind parent.

This heartfelt confidence in Christ is accompanied with a spirit of true obedience. He who commits his case to a physician, follows his prescriptions; and he who yields his heart to Christ in humble faith, takes his will as the guide of his actions. He looks to Christ as his refuge, his deliverer, his friend; he takes hold on his hand and cheerfully walks with him in the path to heaven. This receiving and resting on Christ for salvation is saving faith.

But how is this faith connected with salvation? It is, by appropriating to the miserable and lost in sin a better righteousness than their own, for the sake of which they may be justified, and by conforming the heart, with its affections, to the moral image of the Saviour, and thus fitting it for heaven.

We have already shown that it is through faith in Jesus Christ that the sinner is justified, and becomes a partaker of the benefits of that righteousness which Jesus hath wrought out for him by his obedience and death. Nor is this all. Faith brings the soul into a state of new and holy obedience, and thus, in its effect on the sinner himself, includes everything essential to his salvation. It awakens in the soul those holy affections which

constitute the moral image of God, lost by the apostacy, and thus recovers it from the power of sin, to the holiness and happiness of Eden. By the distrust of God, man originally fell ; by faith, he is recovered from the fall. That confidence in God which has been lost, but which is the essential element of true religion, could have never inspired the heart of fallen man, without the divine interposition. For so great and glorious is Jehovah, so terrible in his justice, as to fill the mind of the guilty sinner with fear rather than with confidence. The sinner could have no feeling of trust in such a being. He could expect nothing but judgment and punishment. It was necessary that God should interfere in his mercy, and display his character as gracious and ready to forgive, to gain the sinner's confidence. This he did when he gave his only begotten Son to die for sinners. Through this sacrifice of love, he has evinced his kind feelings to men, and his readiness to have mercy on them and save them. He here meets the sinner with such evidences of compassion for him, such overwhelming manifestations of love, as are fitted to move and melt the heart, and to lead that heart to turn to him in repentance ; and he calls upon the guilty world to look upon the cross, and no longer doubt the intensity of his desire for the salvation of the perishing and lost of our race.

And what is the effect of this display of goodness upon the wanderer from God? He looks, and while he gazes on the bloody scene of Calvary, his heart is touched. The tears flow down his cheeks at this evidence of God's goodness, and the thought of his own ingratitude. He can no longer withhold his sympathies. Was it for me, he asks, that God's own Son endured such dreadful agonies? Was it to redeem and save my soul? O how ungrateful I have been! How guilty and lost I am! This is just the Saviour that I need. He is worthy of my confidence. I can safely trust myself in the hands of such a Redeemer. I can, I do believe in him. Take my heart; take all I have; O Saviour, I give myself away to thee for ever more!

Where now is that hard heart, which so long resisted the motives of the Gospel? It is gone. That heart is won to Christ; and, confiding in the Saviour, the sinner is led back to God, and reconciled. Faith in Christ is the means of renewing his lost confidence in God. It is the Gospel remedy; a means to an end; the very remedy which the lost sinner needs, to be recovered back to God's friendship. Through trusting in Christ, the sinner is enabled to approach God with confidence, and to look up to him in the spirit of adoption, crying Abba, Father.

The Gospel itself is a remedy. It may be compared to the splints, bandages, and crutches, applied to a broken limb, to enable one to hobble till he can walk. The great end of redemption is complete restoration to holiness. And it is through faith in Jesus Christ that this holiness commences in the soul, the soul itself is brought into a state of reconciliation to God, and the believer led on from step to step, overcoming the power of sin within him, till final victory and heaven are attained. Faith thus becomes the means of salvation.

The soul in its affections and interests is by faith so united to Christ as to participate in the benefits of his atoning sacrifice. It thus becomes invested with the Saviour's own righteousness, is released from condemnation, and inspired with hope. The heart, with its affections, is changed. Distrust yields to faith. This faith all who are ever saved must possess. Is it yours? Do you now believe on the Son of God? Does your soul, in a spirit of submissive obedience, rest on him alone?

CHAPTER XVI.

REPENTANCE.

It is an established truth of the Gospel, that repentance is necessary to forgiveness. Repentance toward God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a life of new and holy obedience, include those practical operations of grace which impart to the regenerated soul satisfactory evidence of conversion. It is important, therefore, to have a distinct apprehension of what repentance is.

Repentance presupposes the facts of the Gospel, affecting the character and condition of fallen man, to be true. It assumes that mankind in their natural state are alienated from God, condemned by his righteous law, and are pressing on in the path of disobedience to death. Repentance includes a turning from this dangerous path into that of life. It is "a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of heart, and endeavors after new obedience." To discover whether or not you possess this grace, take up its several qualities as

here set forth, and with them compare your heart and life.

1. A TRUE SENSE OF SIN is essential to repentance, and it is here described as the moving spring of that turning unto God which repentance includes. No one will ever repent, unless he knows and feels himself to be a sinner. It is not enough to feel that he belongs to a sinful race ; it is necessary that he should feel deeply sensible of his own guilt. How else can his repentance be genuine ? And here it is that many fail, because they are ignorant of the wickedness of their own hearts. Prompted by the consideration that religion is something to be sought, they go seeking in the dark after that of which they have no distinct conception. Perceiving that those who are savingly converted go to God in prayer, and give attendance on the duties of religion, they do the same ; and they depend on what they do to give them acceptance with God ; for they know not what to seek, and have no proper conception of what their salvation requires.

But in true repentance, the fact of one's own sinfulness is distinctly perceived. The repentant sinner sees that he has wandered from God and abused his goodness, and that nothing but a wicked spirit of disobedience could have caused the sins of his past life. He feels that he is without excuse

for having treated so wrongfully the kindest and best of beings, the benefactor who has conferred upon him innumerable blessings, the Saviour who has redeemed him, and the Holy Spirit sent to convert his soul. He feels that his sins justly deserve punishment, committed as they have been against a holy and just God; and that, treated according to his desert, he would be forever cast away. He feels that his heart, in its inclinations, is opposed to God, and has been so all his life hitherto, and it is the language of his humble confession, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

This is what is meant by a true sense of sin. This sensibleness of its evil, as committed against a holy and just God, is necessary to repentance. A child, unless conscious of the wrong done his parent by disobedience, cannot properly repent of that wrong. So must the sinner know and feel his sin to be a wrong done to God, deserving his just displeasure, or he cannot repent of it.

2. In repentance, and as necessary to its exercise, there is included AN APPREHENSION OF THE DIVINE MERCY.

An apprehension of the divine mercy is a clear perception of the fact that God is able consistently with his character to grant the forgiveness of sins to all who humbly turn unto him. This is necessary to repentance. No one will ever penitently turn

from his sins to God, who is not influenced by the consideration of mercy provided through a Saviour. Separate from such a consideration, the terrors of hell threatened against the wicked would tend only to drive them to despair, not to win and subdue their hearts. The idea of a compulsory repentance is preposterous. The heart must be won, if it ever yield itself up to God. And it is the view of the divine mercy, through the cross, which makes the sinner feel his own intrinsic vileness, and brings him into an attitude to receive forgiveness.

He who distrusts the ability and willingness of Christ to save, or feels himself to be too great a sinner to experience mercy, cannot, while in such a state of mind, repent. He must abandon all such distrust. He must feel assured that he is not beyond the reach of heaven's mercy, or else despair will seize his mind, and all his efforts be paralyzed. The perception of mercy is necessary to fire the soul with ardor, and give it activity in seeking salvation. Have you a distinct perception of this mercy? Have you any doubt that God is sincere in his gracious proffers, and that if you come to Christ you will be saved? Can you question the fact revealed in the Gospel, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that the vilest of the vile are not beyond the reach

of his cleansing power? If you cannot, then is this apprehension of the mercy of God yours.

3. GRIEF ON ACCOUNT OF SIN, AND HATRED OF IT, are also essential elements of true repentance. The grief felt on account of sin is because God is treated so wrongfully, not merely because the soul is endangered and rendered liable to punishment. The child may weep in view of the rod, when it has no grief at having injured a kind and good parent. The grief of true repentance is a holy sorrow felt at having treated God so wrongfully.

So, also, is there felt a hatred of sin, as being that abominable thing which God hates. It is not the terrors of the law which are hated, but sin, which brings these terrors on the soul. Do you know by your experience this grief; and do you hate sin because it is abhorrent to God? If so, you have thus far evidence of being in a truly penitent state.

4. Repentance also includes A TURNING UNTO God. This is not merely external, but is a turning both in heart and life. The heart turns from its sins, hating them, sorrowing on account of them, and cleaves in its affections to God. Without attempting to excuse or palliate his past transgressions, the repentant sinner approaches his Maker with the language of the prodigal son on his lips, "Father, I have sinned against heaven

and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." And while he thus confesses his sins, he renounces them, turning from them unto God, with full purpose of soul to live henceforth unto his glory.

Not only is the heart thus changed in repentance, but there is also induced a change of life. The repentant sinner no longer walks in the path of disobedience; his mouth is no longer open with blasphemies; his life is no longer marked by a disregard of God and the duties of religion; but obedience to the Gospel henceforth characterizes his actions. He loves God, and loves to do his holy will in all things.

Are you conscious of thus turning in heart and life unto the Lord? Do you now love the things that God loves, and hate those which he hates? Are you assimilated in your spiritual feelings to him? And is it your desire and prayer that you may ever be found walking in all his statutes and ordinances blameless?

5. In repentance, there is a "FULL PURPOSE OF NEW OBEDIENCE." There is a determination formed and expressed, to live henceforth in conformity to God's will, and to do all in one's power to honor him, his law, his Gospel, and his grace, by an open and public acknowledgment of duty to him, and the expression of a purpose to serve him.

6. And this is accompanied with "ENDEAVORS AFTER NEW OBEDIENCE." He who turns to God as a repenting sinner, tries in every way he can to make reparation for his past misconduct. He strives after conformity to God. He assumes the panoply of the Christian warrior, and goes on warring with his worldly lusts, till through grace he comes off victorious. Thus his heart is purified from dead works to serve the living God; and he advances from one degree of grace unto another, till he reaches heaven at last.

This is true repentance. Have you experienced it? Have you a true sense of sin, and a distinct perception of the mercy of God through a Christ? With a grief and hatred of your sins, have you turned from them unto the Lord? Have you this full purpose of obedience, and do you endeavor to serve God, because you love him and love the duties which he requires? If so, you are a true penitent, and may hope in the divine mercy as displayed in the forgiveness of all your sins.

CHAPTER XVII.

SANCTIFICATION.

FAITH issues in sanctification. He who receives and rests on Christ, is a new man. In the very act of believing his heart is spiritually changed, and this change is the beginning of a work of grace in him, which is to result in complete holiness.

But how is the spiritual act of believing productive of holiness in the depraved heart? It is so, through its own impulsive influences, and its necessary associations. It is impossible to conceive of faith separate from its relations, any more than to conceive of that great luminary the sun as separate from light and heat. A hole drilled into a dungeon may let in a beam of light from the sun, but it cannot let in this beam without letting in at the same instant all the primary colors which are associated in that light and are among its constituent elements,—violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. Light is a combination of rays of these colors, and the smallest beam includes them all, as certainly as does the sun itself. And yet it is as proper to speak of light

separate from the primary colors, as to speak of faith separate from repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the other Christian graces, which are associated with and dependent upon it. Though we may speak of faith as an exercise of the mind distinct from love, yet they always exist in combination, and faith, however small and feeble, though it resemble but a single beam of light, cannot be let into the dungeon of the depraved mind, without conveying thither all its associated Christian graces. It thus conveys into the soul the proper elements of holiness, and by its own impulsive influence, and its necessary associations, begins to produce in the soul all its proper fruits.

No man can believe on Christ, who does not, in the act of believing, turn from his sins in true repentance; nor can one thus confide in Christ as indebted to the purchase of his death for forgiveness and deliverance from hell, and not love Him, and the things which He loves. Faith includes love, and also hope and joy as concomitant affections. Not that faith and love are the same emotions, any more than yellow and red are the same colors; but they are dependent on the same principle, and are associated in the same beam of light divine.

Faith naturally includes such a view of Christ, and his glorious excellence, as to inspire love,

and this awakens a spirit of real devotedness to him, and a supreme desire of pleasing him. He who believes in Christ aims to please him, by conforming himself to his holy will ; and he does it out of a spirit of grateful love. And this is the principle of all true obedience. He who believes in Christ, loves him, hopes in him, desires to do his will, repents of his neglect of duty toward him ; and as Christ and God are one, is thus brought into a state of conformity to God, and is sanctified through faith.

This is the remedial system of the Gospel. The sinner, who is guilty and condemned, confides in a righteous and atoning Saviour, and in a spirit of grateful love obeys him, and goes on subduing his sin, living more and more to the glory of his Redeemer, till in heaven he reaches a state of perfect love and of unfeigned obedience, and is restored to the holiness lost through the great apostacy.

The sinner, in believing, does not become perfect by this one act of faith ; but united, by faith, to Christ, he believes, that he may be perfect. His faith is unto holiness. He comes to Christ, gives himself away to him, believes in him, and follows him, till he is thus enabled to overcome the world, and to triumph in the Saviour's righteousness. All his salvation is through faith, which is the impulsive principle of true holiness ; and faith is

susceptible of cultivation. The more Christ is brought into the view of the believer, the more elevated becomes his faith. Reading, meditation, prayer, and attendance on the ordinances of religion, are all aids to the true religion of the heart. They increase the believer's holiness by increasing and elevating his faith. Faith inspires obedience, and obedience reacts upon the faith to increase and strengthen it, as water evaporated returns in rain to the springs from whence it flowed.

The man who believes in Jesus Christ obeys him; and obedience proceeding from an inward principle of faith, brings the soul nearer and still nearer to God in confidence and love, till the work of redemption in him is complete, and he is gathered among the saints in heaven, and confirmed in that state of holiness and bliss, attained through faith in the Redeemer. This is the remedial system of the Gospel; this the gracious plan of salvation which it proffers to a lost world.

Sanctification then proceeds from faith. No sooner is the soul united by faith to Jesus Christ, than it commences that warfare against sin which is to be carried on unto complete victory. The soul that is converted, begins to love God supremely; but love is not then perfect. To love God supremely, is to love him more than we love any other being, or all other beings in the universe; to

love him perfectly, is to love him in as high a degree as is commensurate with our intelligent and active powers. Between these two points, supreme, and perfect love, lies the path of the Christian life.

As faith is susceptible of cultivation, and may rise from one degree of strength to another, so it is by cultivating our faith, that we become more and more holy, It is Christ believed on with all the heart which produces holiness in the soul; and the stronger this faith, the more elevated love becomes, and the more perfect the obedience.

The means to advance in holiness are to study Christ; to live near to God; to meditate on his glorious character; to read his Word; to draw nigh to him in prayer. Whatever tends to keep Christ before the mind, and to bring the soul into a perfect reliance on this Saviour, tends to increase our faith, and produce in us the fruits of holiness.

The great author of our sanctification is the Holy Spirit. As he is the source of all spiritual life in the soul, so is he the author of that holiness, and advance in spirituality which are included in sanctification. To make progress in this divine life, you must put yourself under his constant guidance and influences, and live by faith on the Son of God. It must be the end and aim of your existence to please him. You must give all dili-

gence to make your calling and election sure, that
“so an entrance may be ministered unto you
abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our
Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW ONE MAY KNOW THAT HE IS TRULY CONVERTED.

Nor by a persuasion in his own mind that he is converted, for this may be only a delusion. Not by a feeling of happiness experienced, for this may originate in a false hope. Not by dreams, for these are mere illusions of the fancy. Not by the good opinions of friends, for these may be built on a sandy foundation. Not from the fact that convictions have suddenly given place to a calm and quiet hope, for this hope may be deceptive, and this quiet but a return to a settled state of worldliness. Nor is a change of heart to be satisfactorily proved by being able to refer to the precise time when this change is supposed to have occurred.

But one may know that he has found Christ, by the spirit of love and obedience into which he is introduced by true conversion. It is the nature of the work of grace, and its fruits, which give the best evidence of a change of heart. If this spiritual change be preceded by genuine conviction, and accompanied by love to God for what he

is in himself; if it awaken delight in God after the inner man, and dispose one to obey Christ in all that he requires, and to please him, this is evidence on which reliance may safely be placed.

A growing desire for conformity to God, hatred of sin as that which is offensive to his pure and holy nature, love for the duties of religion, the spirit of repentance, faith, love, humility, and devotion to Christ, these are the fruits of holy principle, and proceed only from a regenerated heart. As these graces reign in the soul, they will prove the genuineness of the conversion, and will evince to the converted person himself that he has found the Saviour.

Would you ascertain your own spiritual state? Examine yourself whether you be in the faith. Take up the great subject of repentance as set forth in a previous chapter, and inquire whether you have experienced that holy sorrow for sin it involves, and in repentance have truly turned in heart and life unto the Lord. Take up the subject of faith in Jesus Christ, as set forth in a previous chapter, and ask yourself, whether, casting away all confidence in your own works of righteousness, you depend for justification on Christ alone. Take up the subject of sanctification, and inquire whether you have the spirit of true Christian obedience, and are pressing on towards

the mark of the prize of the Christian's high calling. Examine the point, not how you have felt in time past, but whether you are now, at this very time, in the exercise of the Christian graces, and under the influence of the spirit of obedience; whether you have true submission to God, and are walking in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord; whether you love the spiritual duties of the closet, love communion with those who love Christ, and choose an association with the people of God in a religious profession, above every other association in life. Pray that God would discover to you your character, and guide you by his Spirit into all truth. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life." Thus, in due time, and by pursuing the proper course, may you come to know the ground upon which your hope is based, and, if you are indeed a Christian, gain a comfortable assurance that you are born of God.

CHAPTER XIX.

A RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.

THIS is proper to be made by one who has satisfactory evidence of his faith in Christ. It is a profession of that faith which already dwells in the soul, and imparts to it a reasonable ground of hope in the divine acceptance. Assurance of hope is not required, for this is gained only through a long, self-denying, and ardent struggle to overcome the world. We make a religious profession, that we may be enabled by means of it to reach this state of assurance. If one finds, on a careful comparison of his heart and life with the characteristics of the Christian, as set forth in the Word of God, a comfortable hope of the divine acceptance, and is inspired with a full purpose to serve God, it is his duty and privilege to confess the Saviour openly before the world.

This duty arises out of his new relationship to Christ as a true believer. Once an enemy to God, and openly known as a despiser and rejecter of the Gospel, he has now come over unto God's side, and it is right that he should be openly

known as God's friend. It is due to himself to make this reparation for the injury done by his past disobedience, and, by a new life, to proclaim abroad the Saviour whom he once openly slighted. It is due to the church of Christ, to unite himself with it, in the promotion of its holy ends and aims. It is due to God for one thus to honor him in the presence of others, and to do all in his power to uphold his law, government, and religion in the world.

This duty also arises out of the express command of our Saviour to his disciples, to let their "light shine before men ;" or, in other words, to be openly known as Christians, and to make the influence of their Christian example felt for the good of others. And in view of this injunction, no one who loves the Saviour can fail openly to profess his religion, without sin. It is the duty of every friend of Christ thus to take the vows of discipleship ; and it is the duty of all men to love Christ, that they may be prepared to make such a religious profession as shall be pleasing to him.

One who loves Christ in sincerity should unite himself with his visible church, that, in this way, and according to the order of his house, he may avail himself of the privileges conferred by such a profession. It tends to guard him against sin,

by engaging him in the view of God, angels, and men, to do right. It ensures to him the benefits of religious association with those who love God, and of their mutual counsel and aid. And it enables him to receive the spiritual benefit resulting from the sacraments.

These, though not endowed with any saving virtue in themselves, are aids to the true religion of the heart. They do not act on man by virtue of his mere participation of them, but only through his faith. There is no saving virtue in merely partaking of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper; all the virtue of this ordinance is derived from the remembrance of Christ and his sufferings. By these being brought affectingly to remembrance, faith is strengthened, and the soul, communicating with him spiritually, receives the blessings resulting from such a communication. Thousands partake of the symbols, who gain no spiritual advantage from the ordinance, because they have no faith. There must be a heart to love Christ and to trust in him, or the participation of the ordinance will be useless. Hence the necessity of faith, that one may come with acceptance to the table of the Lord, and gain a spiritual advantage in so doing.

But many are deterred from a religious profession, because they feel themselves too unworthy

to come to the communion table. When this feeling of unworthiness proceeds from true humility, it is the best evidence that he who feels thus is a proper subject of grace, and that, of all others, he is the one to come. But the question with the humble believer should be, not whether he himself is worthy to come, for he never will be, and none but a Pharisee will feel himself to be worthy; but it is, whether Christ is worthy to be his Prince and Saviour. And if he feel that he is, he need not hesitate on account of his own imperfections, for the greatest honor he can confer on his Saviour, is to take him at his word, when he says that he came into the world to save the lost.

To partake unworthily, in the sense designed to be rebuked by the apostle, refers to the manner of regarding and treating this sacred ordinance, and not to the general unworthiness of those who receive it. The apostle does not say, that for one to partake who is unworthy involves the commission of the specified sin, but that he who partakes in a wicked and improper manner commits it. The table is spread and the feast provided for none but the unworthy. It is an ordinance not for holy beings, but for sinners; not for angels, but for weak, ignorant, and sinful men. There are no terrors surrounding the sacred feast to one who, sensible of his guilt and unworthiness, rests by faith on

the Redeemer, and goes forward in humble dependence on his grace. The sacred feast was intended for the unworthy, who yet believe in Jesus ; for the weak, ignorant, and guilty, who trust in the atoning Saviour for justification, and seek, by the suitable remembrance of Christ, to increase their faith and love.

Some have hesitated to come forward, and that for years, who feel that they love Christ ; and have involved themselves in great unhappiness and loss of spiritual strength by such an unwise delay. At a communion occasion, on which there was received a man well advanced in years, I was once present. He had indulged a hope of acceptance with God, at times, for twenty, or thirty years, but had never made a profession of Religion. He had been deterred by fears, arising from a misconceived view of his duty. But he had never felt easy in this neglect, and had sometimes almost become deranged under the conflicts of his feelings. Had he gone forward years before, he might have been strengthened in his faith and hope, by communing with the Saviour, have had great comfort in religion, and been an active and a useful Christian. But as it was, his life was almost wasted, in consequence of looking at himself, and not looking up to Christ, and going forward in humble dependence on him, to obey all his commands. It is not pos-

sible for one to acquire assurance of hope while living in the neglect of duty; and if he postpone a religious profession, expecting first to gain such an assurance, he must fail of it. For how can he gain the evidence of his certain acceptance with God, while living in express disobedience? We are to obey Christ in the commemoration of his death, that by means of this commemoration we may be strengthened in our inward man, and enabled to rise high in our spiritual attainments, ever pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. And if we ever gain assurance, it will be in this way.

If you feel that you have experienced that change of heart described as a new birth, that you love Christ, that you have true faith in him, and find, on inquiry, satisfactory evidence of this renovated spiritual state, you ought not to hesitate to unite yourself with the professed disciples of Christ, and to do it at once. You ought not longer to delay this duty than to settle in your own mind the points which have been suggested; and the time required for this differs with the different experiences of the converted soul. Remember that it is a duty pressing on you constantly, to own Christ as your Saviour, and to be in a suitable state to make this profession intelligently.

And the sooner you can conscientiously and scripturally avail yourself of the benefits of communing with Christ at his table, the happier and better it will be for you.

The obligations assumed in a religious profession bind you to God your Saviour in an everlasting covenant, and to a supreme devotion to his cause. They also bind you to his church in a covenant of love, to observe all the duties of a Christian, in your closet, family, and the world around you. You enter into covenant with God and his Church, to be the Lord's, and in all your ways to be governed by the pure principles of your duty, as recorded in the sacred oracles. This covenant is for life. It is one from which you can never draw back, but in which you publicly commit yourself to God and his people, to walk henceforth in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

And now what is your purpose? Sensible that the claims of God rest upon you, that you love him, and that you ought, in heart and in life, to be devoted to his service, do you feel that it is your duty to be openly known as a Christian? The path of a religious profession is then plain before you, and it is the path of life. You enter it through Christ, the door; and by binding your-

self by covenant to his service, and by pressing on in that path, you may hope at length to attain a certain assurance of your acceptance with God, and to enter through the gate into the celestial city.

CHAPTER XX.

**TO PLEASE GOD, AS THE SUPREME MOTIVE OF OUR
ACTIONS, OUR ONLY SAFE GUIDE IN THE JOURNEY
OF LIFE.**

How am I to know what is my duty, that through the divine grace assisting, I may continue to walk in the path to heaven, is an inquiry which often arises in the thoughts of those who have begun a Christian life. The most appropriate answer is, by a diligent study of the Bible, and fervent prayer for that wisdom which cometh from above. The rule of life is the will of God revealed in the holy Scriptures; and the most suitable directions which can be given for the guidance of your conduct is, let it be the chief motive of all your actions to please God.

A motive is that which moves or excites the mind to a given course, and which leads it to act one way rather than another. He who gives for the purpose of showing to others the extent of his liberality, acts from a motive of vanity; he who steals to increase his possessions, from a motive of covetousness. A motive may be subordinate or supreme, inferior to others which govern it, or the

governing motive of the mind controlling and giving direction to the whole.

Our actions in the largest sense include every feeling, thought, or volition in which we are free and responsible. When it is said that it should be the governing motive of our actions to please God, it is meant that it should be the end and aim of our being to do what he approves. Every action which is good or bad in its nature as compared with a moral law, is a moral action, and is done under the influence of some motive. An involuntary act has no moral character, and is neither good nor bad. But an action proceeding from a wrong intention is wrong. So that the intention enters into the nature of an action, and imparts to it a moral quality.

Every moral act is done from some motive, and this motive may be subordinate or supreme, according to the nature of the transaction. A robber aims to possess himself of another's property for his own gratification. This is the motive which controls and gives character to all the inferior motives which are brought into play in the accomplishment of this great end. The robber chooses his weapons of attack, selects a convenient spot, arranges his plan, waits till darkness creeps over the earth, springs upon his victim, takes his money, and then obliterates, so far as he can, all marks

which may awaken suspicion and lead to his own arrest. Innumerable motives of an inferior kind are here brought into action, all of which are subordinate to the supreme motive which controls them; and the influence of the supreme motive extends itself down to the minutest action necessary to the accomplishment of the wicked purpose, and gives it character. It is not wrong for a traveller to post himself by the highway; but when he does it for the purpose of robbery, it is wrong. It is not sin for one to step into the road and seize a horse by the bridle; but when done with the intention of robbing a traveller, it is sin. It is not wrong for one to eat and drink; but when one does it to strengthen himself for the commission of some nefarious crime, it is sin. Even the minutest act done under the influence of a wicked motive and for the purpose of carrying into execution a crime, is sinful.

The supreme motive gives character to all the inferior motives and their acts. A mechanic, in constructing a locomotive, subordinates one part of the machinery to another, in conformity to a general intention to produce an engine of great speed and power. The intention of constructing the boiler is to generate steam; of the piston, to produce motion; of the joints in the extended rod of the piston to render this motion rotary; of this

rotary motion, to act on the wheels ; and of the flanges, to keep the wheels on the iron track. Every cylinder, pipe, joint, and wheel, has its specific office, and is arranged with direct reference to speed and power. The end of one part is to act on another in such a way that the combined action of all the parts may accomplish the intention which governs the construction of the whole. This great end extends itself down to the minutest point, and every rivet is driven and clenched with reference to this end. So the actions of life are all moulded with reference to the governing motive which shapes and gives character to those even which are the most minute.

But in the case just cited, it is not the supreme motive of the mechanic to give his engines speedy and powerful motion. This is indeed the motive which governs the construction of the various parts of the engine, but it is subordinate to another, which is, the pecuniary advantage to be derived from his manufactures ; and this is subordinate to another, which is, the use to which he designs to apply his gains. If it were his great aim in acquiring wealth, to use his means to crush a neighbor out of the ill-will he bears him, the influence of this wicked motive would extend itself down to all the inferior ones which are brought into play in the construction of a locomotive ; and

every volition put forth in its accomplishment, every blow of his hammer, every rivet driven, and even his daily food partaken as a means to accomplish so base an end, are sinful. Done with a wicked motive, these acts partake of the character of that motive. Though an innocent employment in itself to forge iron, and drive and clench a heated rivet, yet even this, when done with a wicked end in view, is sin; and he who acts under the influence of such a motive is a wicked man.

But if the great motive of acquiring property be, to use it for such purposes as are pleasing to God, the influence of this motive will extend itself down to the minutest actions directed to accomplish this end; and every blow of the hammer, struck with this end in view, would be pleasing to him, because done from a right motive; and even the food partaken with such an end in view, would be an act done from a supreme regard to his glory.

Two men may be partners in the same business, and yet act from widely different motives. The one may aim to acquire wealth to use it in promoting his licentious and sinful pleasures; and the other, that he may use it in doing good. The one makes it the end and aim of his being, to please himself; the other, to please God. They may conduct their business honestly; for honesty

is necessary to the enjoyment of public confidence. They may be scrupulously true to their word, and faithful in their dealings ; for these things are necessary to enable them to win success. They may be equally industrious, and, so far as their external conduct is concerned, be equally blameless. And yet, the one, governed by a supremely selfish motive, is a wicked man. He acts without regard to God in the duty he owes him, and God is not in all his thoughts. The other acts from a supreme intention to please God. He therefore begins the day with him, carries the thought of him into all his business, and is moral, temperate, and industrious, because he aims to please him ; and when the duties of the day are over, retires to rest with God in his heart, and praise to him on his lips. In the one case, honesty is a mere expediency to gain a certain end ; in the other, it is a principle of holy obedience. In the one, the morality and industry of life are based on a worldly and selfish policy ; in the other, they spring from a just fear and reverence of Jehovah.

Two merchants traffic for gain. One acts from a supreme desire to please God by the use of his acquired wealth ; the other, from a supreme desire to please himself. In the one, the good motive extends itself to every business transaction, and he will do nothing, for the sake

of gain, displeasing to God. In the other, the bad motive extends itself to every act, and God is not thought of, or his law, to guide the nature of his business transactions, but only his own pleasure. In the one case, the tradesman feels himself bound by a supreme desire to please God, and makes his law the rule of his conduct; in the other, by no law but that of custom, or his own pleasure. In the one case, honesty is a sterling principle of goodness; in the other, a mere worldly expedient.

These points are susceptible of a great variety of illustration. If one should show great kindness to a poor family, and it should be at length discovered that the intention of this kindness was to win their confidence, to enable him the better to seduce and destroy one of its members, all these generous acts, in themselves right, would appear as base and infamous when their wicked motive should be brought to light.

If to this base motive you could superadd that of pleasing God, what would be the result? It would instantly correct that which is base, and bring the motives and conduct of the man into conformity with the divine will. It is impossible, therefore, that a motive of pleasing God should be the governing motive in such a case. The supreme motive of conduct so base as that which is

here supposed, could be none other than a supreme desire of self gratification irrespective of God ; for no man could for a moment think that such wicked acts would be pleasing to God.

It is impossible, therefore, to transfer our wicked actions to the control of a supreme and governing motive which is good, and have them remain wicked ; nor can we transfer our good actions to the control of a wicked motive, and have them continue good ; nor is it possible to make any such transfer. Every wicked action proceeds from a wrong motive, and every holy action from a motive which is right.

How, then, can an unconverted man, the supreme motive of whose life is to please himself, do an act which is holy and pleasing to God ? He cannot do such an act. Admit that it is the supreme motive of an unconverted man to please himself, and there is not an act done under the influence of this motive but that is destitute of holiness ; not one which is pleasing to God. Not a thought does he think, not an emotion feel, nor an act perform, in regard to which he can justly claim the merit of goodness ; but all his actions are unholy, because done from a supremely wicked motive.

How, then, can one, the supreme intention of whose mind is to please God, commit sin ? We an-

swer, that an intention may be supreme, and yet may fail at all times to exert a proper control over our actions; and man is liable to fail of having all his actions controlled by supreme love to God, in consequence of the temptations to which he is exposed. There is a conflict in the Christian's mind between the opposite and conflicting principles of supreme love to God, and the sinful love of self which has been dethroned and subdued, but not destroyed. When he falls into sin, the latter principle is the motive of the sinful act; and when the former governs him, it re-establishes its control as to the wrong act, and brings him sincerely to repent of it.

To constitute one a Christian, it is not necessary that his intention to please God should be perfect, and constantly exercising a control over his actions, but only that it should be supreme. A perfect intention of this kind, which exerts a perfect control over the mind, is the prerogative of perfect and sinless beings. It must be the supreme and governing intention of the Christian to please God; but this intention may fail at times to control his affections and conduct, and, in this sense, be imperfect. It may not, at all times, exert such an influence on the mind as to prevent unholy motives and conduct from springing into existence there.

A galvanic battery at the end of a telegraph

wire does not always exert the same perfect control over the different parts of communication along the line, though it is designed to do so. The wire may be broken, or the electric influence may be led off to the earth by a conducting body falling across the wire, and thus the battery, for a season, may lose its perfect control over the points it is designed to reach. Or the electric influence may be diffused into the atmosphere by the conducting power of a dense vapor, and the battery thus fail of its natural and proper control. But its influence is restored when these disturbing causes are removed. No one presumes to doubt that the telegraph is a good and useful instrument, though liable to many imperfections. So is it with the Christian. The chief motive of his actions is to please God; yet his thoughts and affections are liable to be temporarily conducted off to worldly things by the innumerable temptations which cross his path; and it is only when supreme devotion to God reassumes its ascendancy and exerts its proper control, that his heart is rectified and the actions of the life become what they should be. It was to this that Paul referred when he said, "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and

bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The motive of pleasing God is morally opposite to that of pleasing one's self, and both cannot at the same time reign supremely in the breast. One of them must be subordinate. When the desire of pleasing one's self is supreme, it casts down God and his laws as inferior to one's own pleasure; and assumes a position hostile to Jehovah, and of rebellion against his government. When the desire of pleasing God establishes a supreme control in the heart, it subordinates the actions of life to Jehovah's will, and inspires a spirit of supreme devotedness to him. These two motives govern all human actions. They are antagonistic principles. Hence our Saviour said, "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And to this fact Jehovah had reference when he said, "Thou shalt have no other god before me."

No one who is guided by the sacred oracles can doubt that it is the duty of all men to please God, and that true religion consists in that spirit of obedience to him which springs from loving him supremely. True religion enters into the life, and

settles the motives of all its actions. There is no conflict between business and religion, and can be no divorce between them ; for it should be the great motive of all our actions, extending to every duty of life, both temporal and spiritual, to please God. Our business must be planned and conducted in all its parts in accordance with this motive ; and so, also, must be our religious duties. If we perform religious duties from selfish considerations, and not out of a supreme desire to please God, the performances are sinful ; and if we conduct our business to please ourselves, irrespective of God, it is sin.

Religion cannot be divorced from our daily business, but enters into it to control the manner of conducting it, to dictate the great end for which it is to be conducted, and to give it such a direction as shall be pleasing to God. All worldly business is to be subordinate to the great motive of pleasing him ; or, in other words, subordinate to religion ; and no one can set up his business as superior to religion, or treat it as of equal importance, without contradicting the first principles of our duty, as inculcated by our Saviour when he said, " Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ;" and without indulging a spirit which, if carried out to its full extent, would aim to dethrone the Almighty.

This shows us by what rule we are to be governed, who aim to walk in the true path of life, and how, in any case, to judge of our duty. It is our duty always to inquire, whether, in doing what we propose to ourselves, we shall act agreeably to the will of our Heavenly Father, and for that purpose we should first consult his written will. No man has a right to please himself by doing that which is not pleasing to God. Not only must his business, but his pleasure be, all subordinate to the great motive of pleasing Jehovah.

If disposed to follow a branch of business of doubtful rectitude, or to conduct a lawful business in a way of questionable propriety; or if tempted to worldly pleasure, and disposed to taste its seductive sweets, his great anxiety should be to know whether that which he purposes will be pleasing to his Creator. If inclined to desecrate the Sabbath, to transact secular business on that day, or amuse himself with secular pleasures, let him ask whether it will be pleasing to God for him to do so.

Nor is it right to please our friends, excepting so far as, at the same time, we please God. It is not the duty of a wife to please her husband, or a husband to please his wife, further than is agree-

able to the will of our Heavenly Father, and will receive his approbation.

A parent ought not to please his child by permitting it to do that which is not agreeable to God. A parent should represent, in his own conduct to his child, the feelings and wishes of God; and if he permit the child to do that which is not pleasing to Jehovah, and sanction such conduct, he becomes to that extent the representative of the devil, and not the representative of God. Nor ought a child to please a parent any further than is pleasing to his Father in heaven. Hence it is written, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

As one may not please himself, so he may not please his employer, excepting in doing that which God approves. No matter who that employer is, or what the service required, no man has a right to please him, excepting in things which are agreeable to the Proprietor and sovereign Lord of all. If one should be required by an employer to desecrate the Sabbath, he would have no right to do so, unless he also could please God in that way at the same time. Nor has an employer a right to demand that another shall do for him what he knows God cannot be pleased with, much less what he has expressly condemned. It would be

as right for such employer to require that one should swear a false oath in court for his sake, as to please him by desecrating that Sabbath which God has commanded to be kept holy. What difference in moral turpitude is there between a violation of the precepts of the first, and a violation of the precepts of the second tables of the divine law? Why is not he who breaks the third command as guilty in the sight of God as he who breaks the ninth; he who takes the name of God in vain, as he who bears false witness? What difference is there in the moral quality of these two acts, excepting that, for the protection of our civil rights, man has laid a heavier penalty on the latter violation than on the former? Man has made a difference between the moral turpitude of a violation of the several precepts of the law; but has God made such a difference? No. Nor will he allow the various distinctions which men have set up to excuse their disobedience.

The same rule is applicable to our country. No one has a right to do for his country that which he may not do for himself, and which God does not approve. No human legislator can make a law binding on the conscience, which is contrary to the will of God expressed in his law; nor has our country any just claim upon our services, to require of us an act which is morally wrong, and

as such is displeasing to Jehovah. The claims of God are infinitely superior to those of country, employers, business, pleasures, friends; and He is to be pleased, whatever may become of all our worldly interests in consequence. The intention of pleasing God, where it reigns supremely in the heart, will lead one to break off every sin and do every duty; and will bear the Christian on, courageously conflicting with the world, till he shall triumph over it, and at last enter the blissful seat of heaven. By observing this rule, and following these directions, you will pursue in safety the journey of life. Take this great principle, study it, and let it shape all your actions into a conformity to God's will. Begin a religious life on right principles, and never swerve from them. Then may you by faith take hold of the Saviour's hand, and be conducted in the path to heaven, till you shall reach that bright and beautiful world, where, with the angels, you will find your happiness in loving and serving God for evermore.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REASONABLENESS OF PLEASING GOD, AS THE MOTIVE OF OUR ACTIONS, AND THE HAPPINESS TO WHICH IT LEADS.

THAT is reasonable which accords with our true condition, provides for our rational wants, and promotes our highest good. It would not be reasonable for God to require a man to fly, unless he should furnish him with wings. But it is reasonable to require him to use his limbs for his own preservation, and in promoting his own happiness. No man can be reasonably required to do what is not for his own good, any more than to put out his own eyes, or sever from the trunk his limbs. Nor can he be reasonably required to do that which will deprave his mind, or to starve his soul, with more reason than to starve his body. Nor can man be reasonably required to become an angel, any more than to become God. In claiming that man shall make it the chief motive of his existence to please him, God does not require of him anything but what is accordant with his highest happiness.

He deserves the supreme love of his creatures,

and that they should make it the chief motive of their actions to please him. He is the Creator of the world, the author of our being, the parent of all our mercies, and, as such, deserves our supreme regard. He is also infinitely excellent. And more than this, he has sought our happiness; and it is due to one so excellent and so glorious, so wise, so powerful, and so good, and who stands in such relations to us, that we look to him for guidance, and make it the chief motive of our actions to please him.

It is also due to ourselves. As dependent and needy creatures, we look to him for the supply of our wants. As ignorant, we look to him for guidance. We cannot of ourselves tell where to find real happiness, or what is for our real good; and it is reasonable that, in our ignorance, we should be required to follow the path which he has marked out, as the path of happiness. As depraved, our hearts are naturally inclined to seek happiness in the world, and to disobey God; and it is reasonable that we should be required to take hold like a little child, of our heavenly Parent's hand, to be led by him into the path of safety.

It is ennobling to man, and tends to elevate him to his proper place in the scale of created intelligence, to be required, as the end of his being, to please God. Habitual converse with infinite

purity can have no other effect than to raise man to this elevation. If he had no other standard of excellence than the creations of his own debased intellect, what would he become? It has been well remarked, that the morality of a people never rises higher than the character of their gods. And if we view the various idolatries of the world, we shall discover this remark verified. How can man fail to be debased by the contemplation of objects in their nature impure? Habitual converse with the impurities of idolatry tends only to moral defilement.

But to commune with God so brings into view his exalted character as to inspire the soul with his exalted virtues. The effect of loving a virtuous being is to purify the affections, as loving an impure object tends to debase them. One cannot love God and not love the virtues which he loves, and hate the sins which he hates. The Deity thus becomes the standard of excellence toward which the affections are constantly rising; and the effect of striving after conformity to so perfect a standard, is to bring the soul in its affections into a moral resemblance to this perfect being.

What can be purer in its influence than love for the purest being in the universe? what holier than communion with holiness itself? The very exercise of affections so excellent and influential, can-

not fail to exalt him in whom they dwell. God being the object of love, the very act of loving him draws the soul away from earthly impurities, and fashions it after his own glorious image; nor can any one make it the chief motive of his actions to please God, and not bear to him a moral resemblance.

The same effect is discernible on the intellect. Every man thinks; but the subjects of thought are widely different in different individuals. The thoughts of a heathen extend only to his daily wants, and to the worship of his idols. Many of our race are sunk in low debasement, subject to the most groveling passions, and hardly superior to the brutes. In these the intellect is debased, and is barely sufficient to enable them to claim the attributes of humanity. There is nothing to draw out into proper action the powers of the soul. Their most exalted ideas and reverential sense of truth and goodness are of the idol gods whose characters are most impure, and the extent of whose wisdom and power is confined to a few tricks of jugglery, practised by their priests.

From this lowest degradation of the human intellect, there is a gradual ascent up to man as ennobled by a knowledge of the true God. When the character of Jehovah is understood, the mind partakes of the elevation of the object of such

knowledge. The thoughts, rising to the infinite Jehovah, the Creator and preserver of all things, receive expansion by the mere contemplation of such a being. The study of his works gives new and more exalted views of his greatness and glory ; and there is a field of investigation thus spread out before the mind, which it may cultivate, and where it may forever find new displays of the character of the Almighty, and new motives to adore and praise him.

How are the thoughts lifted above the objects of sense, and the groveling creations of a debased imagination, when they rise to fix themselves on the Supreme Being ! The very study of such a character, the mere thinking on him, tends to the intellectual elevation and moral improvement of the human mind. Thought is expanded, memory rendered a receptacle for the most valuable of all human attainments, judgment is strengthened, and the whole intellect clothed with moral beauty.

Man never suitably conceives of his own true dignity, till he comes into a proper acquaintance with God. To know himself as a man, it is necessary to know God, else he cannot fail to mistake his own position as a creature, and improperly to estimate his own character. It is only when he recognizes the fact that he is created in the divine image, and discovers what that image is, that he

rises in the scale of being immeasurably superior to the brutes, and takes his proper place with angels around the throne.

The ennobling influence extends itself to the moral faculties. An enlightened conscience is the result of acquaintance with God. The sense of right and wrong sometimes becomes so weak, through ignorance and depravity, as to seem almost lost in man. This moral principle is susceptible of cultivation. In proportion as God is loved, and it is made the motive of all our actions to please him, does conscience rise from its degradation to resume its proper influence over man. The intellectual and moral faculties are thus rescued from the degrading influence into which depravity has cast them ; and the soul itself, through the supreme desire to please God, emerges from its degradation, to resume its original character and become fitted for heaven. In no other way can this great end be attained, but by making it the motive of all our actions to please God. It is therefore a reasonable requirement on his part, to demand this conformity in us to his holy will.

It also promotes our true and substantial happiness, to be required thus to please God. Conformity to his will is the source of true happiness. That which springs from the objects of sense must terminate with those objects. But that which

springs from a supreme desire to please God, is as pure and unfailing as is the crystal stream of Paradise. The soul, by loving him, is moulded into a resemblance to his perfect character, and comes into possession of the like moral feelings and enjoyments. Its sins forgiven, received into the enjoyment of the divine friendship, and the adoption of sons, associated with the divinity in an endearing relationship, and introduced into the society of heaven, it enters into happiness without alloy.

The Christian so confides in God, that he is led by him through all the dangers and trials of this earthly pilgrimage. The consciousness of having in God a protector and friend, is the source of pure enjoyment. Indeed, the happiness arising from this source exceeds all that the unconverted soul ever knew. There is peace in the soul when God becomes the supreme object of its love. Amid the storms of adversity, there is felt a calm repose; and in the hour of death, the consciousness of being sustained by the everlasting arm, takes away every sting, and kindles in the believer's heart a holy and triumphant joy. And whither does the spirit of the dying saint go, but to the bosom of his Father, and our Father, of his God, and our God? Introduced into the celestial world, it is then attracted to the object of its

supreme love; and in the society of God and angels, finds its happiness for evermore. Man thus realizes the true and substantial happiness for which he was originally created. How great this happiness, who can tell? "Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those who love him." None but the true Christian can form any suitable estimate of the pleasure of loving God, or of the bliss attained in his presence in glory.

We see the blessed God stooping from his throne in heaven to conduct us amid the dangers and trials of our mortal state to his heavenly abode. And nothing can be more reasonable, and in accordance with his own wisdom and goodness, than that we should be required to walk with him in all our journey to the grave. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things that thou canst desire are not to be compared with her. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Thus to glorify and enjoy God is the great end of our being; and we are required to obey him that we may be happy. God has thus consulted

his own glory and our good. "Behold what manner of love the father has bestowed upon us, that we may be called the sons of God!" "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It is the great end of redemption, to rescue and save guilty man, to deliver him from all his transgressions, and elevate him to the holiness and happiness of primeval innocence. He who is saved is made forever happy. All the evils incident to his depraved nature are removed, and he is by death introduced into the glorious abode of angels, and to the society of the just made perfect.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOME.

THE path of life conducts us to our home. We are strangers and pilgrims on earth. Our friends are passing away, and the generations now on the journey of life are traveling to the grave. This world cannot long be our abode. But if we love God there is a place provided for us, which is properly called our Father's house. It is heaven, the Christian's home. It is here that the child of God, having finished his labors, his journey ended, and the sun of life gone down, is introduced into the family of heaven and the society of the redeemed. Here he discovers the pious friends who have gone before him, all gathered, and all happy in the knowledge that sin and pain and death are forever shut out from that blissful abode. It is a blessed family; and there is joy in it at every introduction of one of earth's pilgrims to its circle.

Here there is no sin, no suffering, no separation from those we love. We shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat; but the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall

lead us unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Here there are employments fit for our immortal nature, and enjoyments unalloyed. There can be conceived no greater happiness than that of heaven. The pilgrims of earth, having toiled along the path of life, and struggled against temptations and sin which beset them, at length finish their pilgrimage. Nature sinks under its infirmities, and the grave receives all that is mortal. But the spiritual and immortal man is at once transported to the society of the blessed, to go no more out of it forever. Who can tell what are the joys felt by the Christian on reaching his home? Who can read the testimonies of the Bible on this subject, and not pray that his portion may be at last with those who love God, "that he may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gate into the city?"

One of the most striking emblems in the sacred Scriptures of the happiness into which the saint is introduced at death, is a beautiful garden, through which flows the pure river of the water of life; as clear as crystal, proceeding from the foot of God's throne. In the midst of the garden, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits and yields her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree

are for the healing of the nations. This emblem has great force, especially to those who live in a sultry climate. Lovely is a watered garden, where fruits and flowers, in every variety, abound, where winter never comes, nor biting frost, to disappoint the hope of man. In the midst of this garden stands the palace of the great king, and this is heaven.

Music is another emblem, under which the bliss of this world of glory is represented. Music has charms, acknowledged by all to whom God has given a proper ear; and nature is full of it. The fields and groves are filled with feathered songsters, which discourse to us delightfully of the opening spring, and make home cheerful with their responding melodies. There is music in the insect's chirp and in its hum, as, with busy wings, it wheels in untiring flight around us. There is music in the sighing wind, the summer's breeze, as it lingers upon the foliage, and in the deep roar of the impetuous tornado. There is music in the muttering thunder reverberating at a distance, and in its startling peals breaking at our side. There is music in the remote waterfall, as its note varies in intensity according to the rarity or density of the changing air. There is music in the roll and dash of the ocean's waves; and some have even fancied that the bright orbs of light, which roll in solemn grandeur on their midnight way, dis-

course sweet music, as from an organ set up for Jehovah's praise in the great temple of the universe. From whatever source music proceeds, the ear loves it; and it is common to provide it for our friends, as a pleasant means of rational enjoyment. God has selected it as an apt emblem of the happiness of heaven. There is music there, and all the harmonies of nature are there brought into such perfect arrangement as to fill the soul with exquisite delight. There is, there must be, happiness in heaven, to render it worthy of such representations as the Bible gives of it; something infinitely more to be desired than any pleasures which earth can possibly confer.

It is a beautiful thought, suggested by the oracles of God, that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever."

If, on the decease of some loved friend, who is saved through Christ, we could discover his glory realized in the symbol of some new and bright star, which should appear and shine with brilliant lustre amid the myriads which fill the eye on a cloudless night, and we could know that star to be the representation of the glory into which that friend has been introduced, the sight of it would deeply affect us. Our gaze would be fixed upon it, as, night after night, it should open its bright

eye upon us from its celestial abode. Often should we sit and gaze, seem to hold converse with it, and in our musing call up into remembrance a thousand endearing looks and actions of our friend, beloved on earth, hallowed now in heaven. The very sight would awaken in us a solicitude to do nothing which would grieve that friend, or which, if known in heaven, would cause there one anxious thought.

Our Saviour compared the Christian's example to light, when he said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your father which is in heaven." And when death removes the Christian from our side, all his infirmities and weaknesses are forgotten, in view of the virtues of the life concentrated in the memory. These present themselves to us as light, and seem to shine as rays from some bright orb in the celestial world. Hence the natural suggestion of a star, as the emblem of his glory, and of the brightness of the firmament which it illumines.

Inconceivably glorious is that state into which the believer comes at death, for no other could sustain the propriety of such emblems, or justify their use. There to shine in glory, is to possess a happiness perfect and enduring. God is called a sun, and the purity and bliss of heaven are compared to the light and splendor which this lumi-

nary sheds around. So the happiness of the Christian at death is beautifully imaged by the bright star, which nightly displays itself to the beholder. Fixed in the celestial firmament, it sheds abroad its glorious beams, with a constancy which nothing can interrupt. Clouds may intercept and hide it from our view; the gathering storm may pile mountains of darkness on each other, and for a time conceal from us its joyful light; but the storm will pass away, and through the breaking cloud that star will still be visible, shining with undimmed lustre, undisturbed by the commotions of earth. Far beyond the clouds that star is set, forever to shine—the emblem of the Christian who has passed to his reward.

Thus glorious is the Christian's home. It is through the path of life that we reach that place of holy rest. This path I have endeavored to describe to you. Will you walk in it, and press forward, that you may reach this heavenly abode? Do not falter in your determination to do so. Do not shrink from the difficulties and trials you must encounter. Remember that you are by faith to take hold of the Saviour's hand, and that he is able to guide you into the green pastures and by the still waters of the everlasting rest. Happy will it be for us who love God, when we shall

have escaped the trials of life, gained the victory over death, and with triumphant songs assembled in our father's house. Happy for us, when, having overcome the world, we shall have reached our HOME.

